Work–Life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium

A Status Report

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Foreword

The issues associated with balancing work and family are of paramount importance to individuals, the organizations that employ them, the families that care for them, the unions that represent them and governments concerned with global competitiveness, citizen well-being and national health. Although much has been written about the topic, only a handful of "high-impact" studies have been conducted on this subject in Canada.[1] Despite the popular press's fixation on the topic (reflecting reader interest) there is, at this time, little sound empirical data available to inform the debate. This is unfortunate as credible research in this area has the power to change how governments and employers think about the issue and how they formulate and implement human resource, social and labour policy.

A decade ago we, along with our colleagues Dr. Catherine Lee at the University of Ottawa and Dr. Shirley Mills at Carleton University, conducted a national study of work–life conflict in Canada to "explore how the changing relationship between family and work affects organizations, families and employers."[2] In total, 14,549 employees from 37 medium and large private sector organizations and 5,921 employees from 7 federal public service departments participated in this research.

A lot has happened in the 10 years since we conducted our first study on work–life balance. Academic research on the topic has burgeoned. Our personal understanding of the dynamics between work and family domains has also broadened as we have undertaken research with several companies in both the public and private sector.

Nationally, the 1990s were a decade of turbulence for working Canadians as companies downsized, rightsized, restructured and globalized. The recession of the early decade was followed by the "jobless recovery" of the mid-1990s and job security was the issue that absorbed many working Canadians and their families. Organizations, faced with a glut of competent employees from which to choose, often paid little attention to becoming "best practice" with respect to human resource management. Paradoxically, as we enter the new millennium there has been a complete about-face with respect to this issue as employers, faced with impending labour shortages, have become preoccupied with recruiting and retaining "knowledge workers."[3] Such employers have recognized that a focus on "human capital" is one key to increased productivity for the workforce of 2001 and beyond.

Throughout the 1990s, technological change and the need to be globally competitive increased the pressures on organizations and employees alike. Time in employment increased for many as did the use of non-standard types of employment. Non-work demands also increased over the decade as family structures continued to change and the percentage of working Canadians with child care, elder care or both (the sandwich generation) continued to rise.

Taken together, these changes suggest it is time for another rigorous empirical look at the issue of work–life conflict. The research outlined in this report and others in the series was designed to provide business and labour leaders, policy makers and academics with an objective "big picture" view on what has happened in this area in Canada in the last decade and what the current situation is. As such, it will allow interested parties to separate the rhetoric from the reality with respect to work–life conflict.

The research study was undertaken with the following objectives in mind:

1. Quantify the issues associated with balancing work and family in the year 2001 and compare the situation today to that of 10 years earlier.
2. Quantify the benefits (to employees, employers, families and Canadian society) of work–life balance.
3. Quantify the costs (to employees, employers, families and Canadian society) of work–life conflict.
4. Quantify the costs to the Canadian health care system of high levels of work–life conflict.

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[1] See, for example, MacBride-King & Paris, 1989; Duxbury et al., 1991; Higgins et al., 1992; Duxbury & Higgins, 1998; Duxbury et al., 1999; MacBride-King & Bachman, 1999.

[2] Duxbury et al., 1991, p. 16.

[3] Peter Drucker (1999) coined the term "knowledge worker" to describe highly skilled employees whose work is complex, cyclical in nature, and involves processing and using information to make decisions.

5. Help employees make the business case for change in this area in their organization.

6. Identify organizational best practices in terms of dealing with work and family issues.

7. Help organizations identify what they need to do to reduce work–life conflict in their organizations.

8. Help employees and families identify what they can do to reduce work–life conflict in their lives.

9. Empirically examine how public, private and not-for-profit (NFP) organizations differ from each other with respect to the work and lifestyle issues identified above.

In other words, this research examines the issues associated with work–life conflict, identifies who is at risk, articulates why key stakeholders (e.g. governments, employers, unions) should care and provides direction on ways to move forward. This research should:

- provide a clearer picture of the extent to which work–life conflict is affecting employees and employers in Canada,
- help organizations appreciate why they need to change how they manage their employees by linking conflict between work and life to the organization's "bottom line,"
- expand the overall knowledge base in this area, and
- suggest appropriate strategies that different types of organizations can implement to help their employees cope with multiple roles and responsibilities.

Theoretical Framework

There is a vast academic literature dealing with the issue of work–life conflict. A complete review of this literature is beyond the purview of this series of reports and counter to our primary objective which is to get easily understood and relevant information on work–life conflict to key stakeholders (governments, policy makers, employees, employers, unions). That being said, readers who are interested in the theoretical underpinnings of this research are referred to Figure 1. This theoretical framework incorporates both fundamental concepts from the research literature and the key insights we have gained from our 10 years of research in this area. This research is based on the premise that an individual's ability to balance work and life will be associated with both work and non-work demands (e.g. time in and responsibility for various work and non-work roles), as well as a number of key demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, job type, socio-economic status, area of residence, sector of employment). Further, it is hypothesized that an employee's ability to balance work and life demands will be associated with outcomes in the following areas:

- organizational (commitment, intent to turnover, absenteeism, job satisfaction, job stress, rating of the organization as a place to work);
- family (family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction, family adaptation, family integration, positive parenting);
- employee (perceived stress, depressed mood, perceived physical health, burnout, life satisfaction); and
- societal (use of the health care system).

Finally, it is postulated that the link between work–life conflict and these outcomes will be moderated by factors associated with both the organization in which the employee works (e.g. work arrangements used, perceived flexibility, work environment, management support, supports and services offered by the organization, ability to refuse overtime), as well as personal strategies that the employee and their family use to cope (e.g. work different hours from spouse, delay having children, have a smaller family, the use of various family-based and individual coping strategies).

The Report Series

This report is the second in a series of six. The series has been organized around the research framework shown in Figure 1 and includes the following:

Report One:	The 2001 National Work–Life Conflict Study
Report Two:	Work–Life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium: A Status Report
Report Three:	Effects of High Work–Life Conflict on the Use of Canada's Health Care System
Report Four:	Who Is at Risk? Predictors of High Work–Life Conflict
Report Five:	Reducing Work–Life Conflict: What Works? What Doesn't?
Report Six:	Work–Life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium: Key Findings and Recommendations from the 2001 National Work–Life Conflict Study

Report One put the series into context by describing the sample of employees who participated in the research and examining the various "risk factors" associated with work–life conflict.

Report Two (this report):

- looks at the prevalence of five forms of work–life conflict: role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference, caregiver strain and work to family spillover;
- makes the business case for change by looking at how high levels of these various forms of work–life conflict affect employers, employees and their families; and
- examines changes in key outcomes over time.

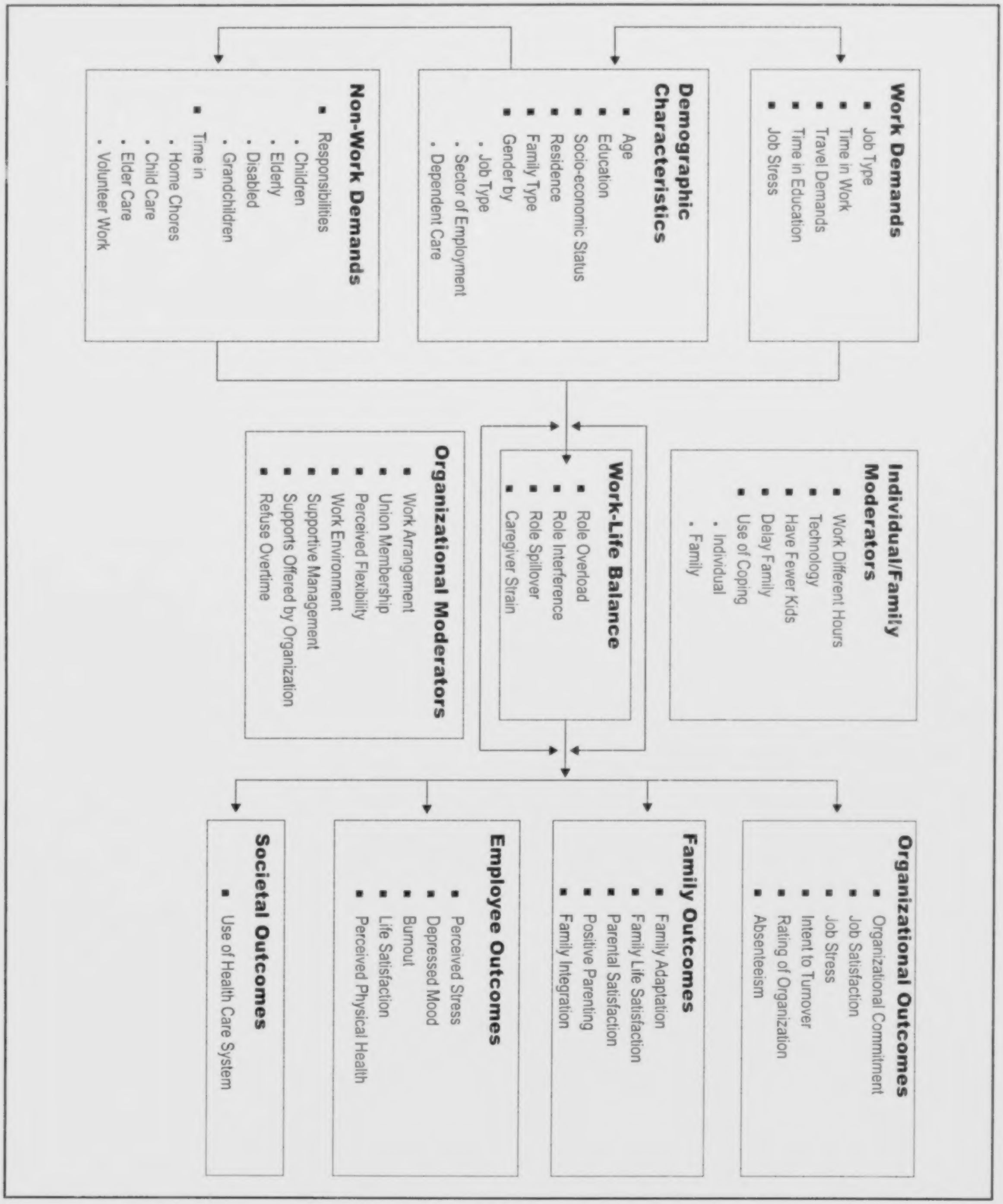
Report Three focuses on how high levels of work–life conflict affect Canada's health care system and quantifies the "costs" of imbalance. It is hoped that this analysis will provide further incentives for change in this area. Report Four addresses who is at risk with respect to high levels of work–life conflict while Report Five examines what employers, employees and their families can do to reduce work–life conflict (i.e. looks at the various moderators outlined in Figure 1). Data in Reports Four and Five should be of interest to those who are committed to developing policies and practices to reduce work–life conflict. The final report provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations coming from this research study.

It is hoped that the production of six specialized reports rather than one massive tome will make it easier for the reader to assimilate key findings from this rich and comprehensive research initiative. Each report will be written so that it can be read on its own. Each will begin with an introduction which includes the specific research questions to be answered in the report, a summary of relevant background information and an outline of how the report is organized. This will be followed by a brief outline of the research methodology employed. Key terms will be defined and relevant data presented and analyzed in the main body of the report. Where possible, national data will be referenced to allow the reader to put the findings from this research into context. Each report will end with a conclusion and recommendations chapter that will summarize the findings, outline the policy implications and offer recommendations.

Organization of Report Two

Report Two is broken down into seven main chapters. Chapter One includes an introduction in which key terms are defined and research objectives delineated. Details on the methodology used in the study are covered in Chapter Two. Included in this chapter is information on the sample, the measurement of work–life conflict, the data analysis undertaken in this phase of the research, and the reporting protocols followed. Chapter Three addresses the following issues: How prevalent are the various forms of work–life conflict in the Canadian workforce at this time? Has the prevalence of work–life conflict changed over the past decade? What is the impact of gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status on the prevalence of work–life conflict? Chapters Four, Five and Six present data that demonstrate why Canada and Canadians should care about work–life conflict. Data relating to the organizational impacts of work–life conflict can be found in Chapter Four. Effects on Canadian families are presented and discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Six focuses on the effects of work–life conflict on the individual employee. Conclusions, policy implications and recommendations are presented in Chapter Seven.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework


Work Demands
Job Type
Time in Work
Travel Demands
Time in Education
Job Stress
Demographic Characteristics
Age
Education
Socio-economic Status
Residence
Family Type
Gender by
. Job Type
. Sector of Employment
. Dependent Care
Non-Work Demands
Responsibilities
. Children
. Elderly
. Disabled
. Grandchildren
Time in
. Home Chores
. Child Care
. Elder Care
. Volunteer Work
Individual/Family Moderators
Work Different Hours
Technology
Have Fewer Kids
Delay Family
Use of Coping
. Individual
. Family
Work-Life Balance
Role Overload
Role Interference
Role Spillover
Caregiver Strain
Organizational Moderators
Work Arrangement
Union Membership
Perceived Flexibility
Work Environment
Supportive Management
Supports Offered by Organization
Refuse Overtime
Organizational Outcomes
Organizational Commitment
Job Satisfaction
Job Stress
Intent to Turnover
Rating of Organization
Absenteeism
Family Outcomes
Family Adaptation
Family Life Satisfaction
Parental Satisfaction
Positive Parenting
Family Integration
Employee Outcomes
Perceived Stress
Depressed Mood
Burnout
Life Satisfaction
Perceived Physical Health
Societal Outcomes
Use of Health Care System

Executive Summary

As we enter the new millennium, Canadian governments, employers, employees and families face a common challenge—how to make it easier for Canadians to balance their work roles and their desire to have a meaningful life outside of work. The research initiative summarized in this report was undertaken to address this issue. This report conceptualizes work[4]-life conflict broadly to include role overload, work to family inference, family to work interference, work to family spillover and caregiver strain. Answers to the following specific questions are provided in this report:

- How prevalent are the various forms of work-life conflict in Canada at this time (reference year of 2001)?
- Has the prevalence of the various forms of work-life conflict changed over the past decade?
- What is the impact of the various forms of work-life conflict on:
  - Canadian organizations?
  - Canadian families?
  - Canadian employees?
- How does gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status affect these issues?

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample consists of 31,571 Canadian employees who work in organizations of medium size (i.e. 500-999) and large size (1,000+ employees) in three sectors of the economy: public (federal, provincial and municipal governments), private and not-for-profit (NFP) (defined in this study to include organizations in the health care and educational sectors). In total, 100 companies participated in the study: 40 from the private sector, 22 from the public sector and 38 from the NFP sector. The sample is distributed as follows:

- 46% of the respondents work in the public sector, 33% work in the NFP sector, 20% are employed by a private sector company;
- 55% of the respondents are women;
- 46% of the respondents work in managerial and professional positions while 54% work in "other" positions (i.e. clerical, administrative, retail, production, technical); and
- just over half (56%) of the respondents have dependent care responsibilities (i.e. spend an hour or more a week in either child care or elder care). The rest (44%) do not.

The 2001 survey sample is well distributed with respect to age, region, community size, job type, education, personal income, family income and family's financial well-being. In many ways, the demographic characteristics of the sample correspond to national data, suggesting that the results from this research can be generalized beyond this research. Approximately half of the respondents to the survey can be considered to be highly educated male and female knowledge workers. The majority of respondents are part of a dual-income family and indicate that they are able to "live comfortably" (but not luxuriously) on two full-time incomes.

The sample includes a substantial number of employees who may be at risk with respect to work-life conflict. The mean age of the respondents to this survey was 42.8 years of age which puts them in the mid-career/fast-track stage of the career cycle, the "full-nest" stage of the life cycle and the 40's transition stage of adult development. Each of these stages is associated with increased stress and greater work and family demands. Three quarters of the respondents are presently married or living with a significant other and 69% are part of a dual-income family. Eleven percent are single parents. Twelve percent live in rural areas. One in three is a clerical or administrative employee with a lower level of formal education (i.e. reduced job mobility) and lower personal and family income. One quarter of the respondents indicates that money is tight in their family; 29% of respondents earn less than $40,000 per year and just over one-quarter live in families with total family incomes that are less than the Canadian average. One in three of the respondents has a 'high school education or less'.

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[4] Throughout this report, the term "work" refers to paid employment

The majority of respondents have responsibilities outside of work. Seventy percent are parents (average number of children for parents in the sample is 2.1); 60% have elder care responsibilities (average number of elderly dependents is 2.3); 13% have responsibility for the care of a disabled relative; 13% have both child care and elder care demands (i.e. are part of the "sandwich generation"). The fact that these data on non-work demands correspond closely to national data provided by Statistics Canada suggests that the findings from this study can be generalized to all Canadians working for large firms.

What do we know about the prevalence of role overload from this study?

Role overload is having too much to do in a given amount of time. This form of work-life conflict occurs when the total demands on time and energy associated with the prescribed activities of multiple roles are too great to perform the roles adequately or comfortably. The following key observations can be drawn regarding role overload from the data reviewed in this report:

High levels of role overload have become systemic within the population of employees working for Canada's largest employers: The majority of employees in our sample (58%) are currently experiencing high levels of role overload. Another 30% report moderate levels of role overload. Only 12% of the respondents in this sample report low levels of overload.

The percentage of the workforce with high role overload has increased over the past decade: Fifty-eight percent of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of role overload—an increase of 11 percentage points over what was observed in the 1991 sample. This increase in role overload is consistent with the fact that employees in the 2001 sample spend more time in work and family activities per week than their counterparts in the 1991 sample. Other data from the 2001 survey would suggest that much of this increase in role overload can be linked to new information and communications technology (e.g. laptops, email, cell phones), organizational norms that still reward long hours at the office rather than performance and organizational anorexia (downsizing has meant there are too few employees to do the work). While a full discussion of workload issues can be found in Report One in this series, it is worthwhile to note the following:

> "Comparisons done using the 1991 and 2001 samples suggest that time in work has increased over the decade. Whereas one in ten respondents in 1991 worked 50 or more hours per week, one in four does so now; during this same time period, the proportion of employees working between 35 and 39 hours per week declined from 48% of the sample to 27%. This increase in time in work was observed for all job groups and all sectors."

What do we know about the prevalence of work to family interference from this study?

Work to family interference occurs when work demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an employee to fulfill family role responsibilities. The data reviewed in this report support the following deductions regarding work to family interference:

Work to family interference is a real problem for one in four Canadians working for larger employers: One in four Canadians report that their work responsibilities interfere with their ability to fulfill their responsibilities at home. Almost 40% of Canadians report moderate levels of interference. The proportion of the Canadian workforce with high levels of work to family interference has not changed over the past decade.

What do we know about the prevalence of family to work interference from this study?

Family to work interference occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an employee to fulfill work role responsibilities. The following key observations can be drawn regarding family to work interference from the data reviewed in this report:

Family to work interference is not common in Canada at this time: Only 10% of the Canadians in this sample report high levels of family to work interference. Another third report moderate levels of family to work interference.

Very few Canadians allow their family demands to interfere with the fulfillment of responsibilities at work: Family to work interference has a very different distribution than observed with role overload and work to family interference. While role overload is positively skewed and work to family interference has a normal distribution, family to work interference is negatively skewed. Three times as many Canadians give priority to work at the expense of their family as the reverse (i.e. give priority to their family).

The percentage of working Canadians who give priority to family rather than work has doubled over the past decade: This increase can be attributed largely to the fact that the number of employees with elder care responsibilities has increased over the past decade.

What do we know about the prevalence of caregiver strain from this research?

For the purposes of this study, the term "caregiver" refers to anyone who provides assistance to a disabled or elderly dependent. Caregiver strain is a multidimensional construct which is defined in terms of "burdens" or changes in the caregiver's day-to-day lives which can be attributed to the need to provide care for this dependent. Four types of caregiver strains resulting from stress have been identified: emotional (e.g. depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion), physical, financial and family strain. The data reviewed in this report with respect to caregiver strain support the following assertion:

Approximately one in four working Canadians experiences high levels of caregiver strain: While the majority of the respondents to this survey (74%) rarely experience caregiver strain, 9% find elder care to be a strain several times a week or daily. Another 17% experience such feelings approximately once a week.

What do we know about the prevalence of work to family spillover from this study?

Work to family spillover arises when work experiences affect an employee's ability to perform non-work roles. Traditionally, researchers have assumed that work will have a negative impact on family (i.e. negative spillover between domains). The concept of spillover included in this study is more comprehensive in that it allows for the possibility that conditions at work might have a positive, a negative, or no impact on the family. The following observations arise from the data on work to family spillover reviewed in this study:

Almost half of the Canadians working for larger firms (44% of this sample) experience negative spillover from work to family: Very few Canadians working for larger firms (only 9% of this sample) perceive that their experiences at work have a positive impact on their family life.

Almost half of the Canadians working for larger firms (47%) are able to compartmentalize—such employees feel that work and family are quite separate domains and that work does not affect their family life: Employees with fewer demands either at work (i.e. those in "other" jobs) and/or at home (i.e. those without dependent care and/or men) are more likely to report that work and family are separate domains.

So ... what can we conclude about the prevalence of work–life conflict in Canada at this time?

The conclusions one reaches with respect to the prevalence of work–life conflict in Canada depends on what measure of work–life conflict is used and the characteristics of the group being studied. Looking at the data optimistically (i.e. taking prevalence of work to family interference and caregiver strain as our measure of work–life conflict), we estimate that one in four Canadians working for medium-size and large organizations experiences high levels of conflict between work and family. This is the best case scenario. The worst case scenario (i.e. estimates calculated using role overload data) is that almost 60% of Canadians who are employed outside the home cannot balance their work and family demands.

Who has more problems balancing work and family responsibilities? The evidence is quite clear—employed Canadians with dependent care responsibilities. Employees who have child and/or elder care responsibilities report higher levels of work–life conflict than those without such responsibilities, regardless of how work–life conflict is assessed (i.e. report higher levels of role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference and caregiver strain, and more likely to report negative spillover). None of the other factors examined in this study is associated with all five work–life conflict measures. Employees without dependent care responsibilities are more able to separate work and family. This greater ability to balance can be attributed to two factors: fewer demands outside of work and more degrees of freedom to deal with work issues (i.e. more control over their time).

Job type is associated with all but one of the measures of work–life conflict. Employees with higher demands at work (i.e. managers and professionals) were more likely than those in "other" jobs to experience high levels of overload, work to family interference and negative spillover (women managers in particular report higher levels of negative spillover). Those in "other" jobs, however, were more likely to report higher levels of caregiver strain due to the financial stresses associated with elder care.

Gender is associated with two out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Women are more likely than men to report high levels of role overload and high caregiver strain. As noted in Report One, women devote more hours per week than men to non-work activities such as child care and elder care and are more likely to have primary responsibility for non-work tasks.

It is interesting to note that when job type is taken into account and when work–life conflict is broken into its component parts, many of the gender differences in work–life conflict referred to in the research literature disappear. This suggests that many of the gender differences in work–life conflict may be attributed to the fact that women are typically compressed into a different set of jobs than men.

Sector of employment is associated with three out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Respondents working in the NFP sector are more likely than their counterparts in the public and private sectors to report high role overload, high work to family interference and negative spillover. The elevated levels of work–life conflict in this sector can be attributed to higher work demands (i.e. respondents in this sector spend more hours per week in employment-related activities and are more likely to have to spend week nights and weekend nights away from home on job-related travel) and how work is arranged (i.e. shift arrangements, rigid work schedules). It should be noted that the women in the NFP sector sample had the most difficulties balancing work and family. The data indicate that the women in this sector have three challenges to meet—heavier demands at home, heavier demands at work, and work arrangements that give them little ability to combine work and non-work demands.

Why should organizations care about work–life conflict?

The majority of Canada's largest employers cannot be considered to be best practice employers: The data reviewed in this report paint a disturbing picture for Canada's larger employers. Only about half of the employees who participated in this study are highly committed to their employer, satisfied with their job and view their organization as "an above average place to work." One in three reports high levels of job stress and one in four is thinking of leaving their current organization once a week or more. Absenteeism (especially absenteeism due to physical and mental health issues) also appears to be a substantial problem for Canadian employers, with half of the respondents reporting high levels of absenteeism (defined as three or more days of absence in the six months prior to the study being conducted). One in four respondents misses three or more days of work in a six-month period due to ill health, while one in ten reports high absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue.

Conditions within Canadian organizations have declined over time: High job stress and absenteeism due to ill health have become more problematic over the past decade. Almost three times as many respondents report high job stress in 2001 (35%) than in 1991 (13%). More than half (56%) of those in the 1991 sample did not miss work due to ill health in the six months prior to the study being conducted, while just under one in four (24%) missed three or more days. In 2001, the number of respondents missing three or more days of work due to ill health increased to 28% of the sample while the proportion reporting zero days' absence due to ill health declined to 46%.

During the same time period, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have also appeared to decline. Whereas almost two thirds of employees in 1991 were highly satisfied with their jobs (62%) and committed to their organization (66%), approximately half report high satisfaction (46%) or high organizational commitment (53%) in 2001. Such findings are not surprising given the fact that workloads (see Report One) and work–life conflict also increased over the same time period. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that many of the management practices instituted by Canada's largest organizations over the past decade (i.e. downsizing, re-engineering, focus on hours not output, pay freezes, restructuring) have had a negative impact on how Canadian employees perceive their job and their employer.

How an employee feels about their organization (i.e. commitment, rating of organization as a place to work, intent to turnover) and their job (i.e. job satisfaction, job stress) has more to do with the type of work being done and the work environment (i.e. job type and sector of employment) than demands outside of work (i.e. gender, dependent care status): An employee's view of both their organization and their job, as well as the amount of job stress they experience and their intent to turnover, can be linked to the type of work being done and the work environment (i.e. job type, sector of employment) rather than gender or dependent care status. In other words, it is what you do within the work setting and how you are treated at work rather than responsibilities outside of work or gender that influence key organizational outcomes. Taken as a whole, the data indicate that managers and professionals are more committed to their organizations and satisfied with their jobs than their non-professional counterparts, despite their jobs being associated with higher levels of stress. The data also indicate that employees in the private sector feel more positively about their employer and their jobs than their counterparts in the public and NFP sectors.

Absenteeism due to child care and elder care problems is associated[5] *with gender and the number of demands an employee has outside of work (i.e. dependent care status) while absenteeism due to emotional, physical and mental health problems is associated with sector of employment:* The link between absenteeism and the context variables under examination in this study (i.e. gender, job type, sector of employment, dependent care status) is more complex. Absenteeism due to child care and elder care (and total absenteeism because it is made up of these two kinds of absenteeism) is strongly associated with gender and demands outside of work (i.e. women and employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to report high levels of these types of absenteeism and, as noted in Report One, high family demands). Absenteeism due to poor emotional, physical and mental health, however, is associated primarily with sector of employment (i.e. work environment), with Canadians in the public sector reporting the highest levels and private sector employees reporting the lowest levels of absenteeism due to these causes.

High work–life conflict is associated with increased absenteeism and substandard organizational performance: The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of substandard organizational performance and increased absenteeism costs. In other words, high work–life conflict negatively affects an organization's bottom line. The data reviewed in this report indicate that the four[6] components of work–life conflict examined in this phase of the study have different impacts on the organization. These differences are worthy of note in that they provide quite different motivations for addressing this issue as well as different prescriptions with respect to change.

Role overload is positively associated with physical and mental health problems: Employees who have high role overload are less committed to their organization, report higher job stress, are less satisfied with their jobs (due largely to dissatisfaction with workloads, hours worked and work schedules), are more likely to be absent from work (due largely to physical and mental health problems), are more likely to be thinking of leaving the organization (to escape frustrating and non-supportive work environments and to get more time for themselves and more recognition for their efforts), and have a less favourable view of their employer. In other words, organizations which have a higher proportion of their workforce with high levels of this form of work–life conflict are likely to have difficulties recruiting and retaining employees and increased costs associated with poor physical and mental health (i.e. greater absenteeism, higher prescription drug costs, greater employee assistance program use). The dimensions of the problem can be assessed by considering the following data. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 5.6 times more likely to report high levels of job stress;
- 3.5 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue;
- 2.3 times more likely to report high intent to turnover;
- 1.6 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism, all factors considered, and to miss three or more days of work in a six-month period due to ill health; and
- 2.8 times more likely to miss work due to child care problems.

In addition, employees who report low levels of role overload are 1.3 times as likely as those with high role overload to be highly committed to their employer, 1.7 times as likely to have a positive view of their employer and 2.0 times as likely to report high levels of job satisfaction.

Work to family interference is negatively associated with recruitment and retention: The impact of work to family interference on the organization is very similar to that observed with respect to role overload. This is not surprising given the high correlation between these two constructs. It should be noted, however, that the respondents with high levels of work to family interference report the lowest levels of commitment (only 44% with high commitment), the lowest levels of job satisfaction (only 24% are highly satisfied with their jobs), the highest levels of job stress (66% report high job stress) and the highest intent to turnover (44% are thinking of leaving weekly or more, with 24% thinking of leaving several times a week or daily!) of any of the respondents in the study. Organizational commitment, intent to turnover and rating of the employer have all been found to be strongly associated with recruitment and retention issues.

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[5] A negative association means that, as the levels of work–life conflict increase, the levels of the outcome decrease (i.e. as overload increases, commitment decreases). A positive association, however, means that as the levels of work–life conflict increase, so do the levels of the organizational outcomes (i.e. as overload increases, so does job stress).

[6] The spillover measure is not used in this report to calculate the costs of imbalance. The way this variable was quantified (i.e. negative spillover, no spillover, positive spillover) makes it inappropriate for these kinds of data analysis.

The data indicate that work to family interference affects how people feel about their employer. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that employees who perceive that they have to put work ahead of family (e.g. feel that they have to make a choice between career advancement and family or between job security and family) are not as loyal and committed as employees who do not perceive that such a choice is necessary.

Family to work interference is positively associated with absenteeism due to child care problems. From the organization's perspective, the main consequence of high family to work interference is higher absenteeism due to child care problems. Respondents with high levels of family to work interference were seven times more likely to miss three or more days of work in a six-month period due to child care than those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict. This suggests that organizations could reduce this form of absenteeism by making it easier for employees with dependent care responsibilities to vary when and where they work.

Caregiver strain is positively associated with absenteeism due to elder care problems and emotional, physical or mental fatigue: Employees with high caregiver strain were 13.0 times more likely than those with low caregiver strain to miss three or more days of work in a six-month period due to elder care problems and 1.8 times more likely to miss work because they were emotionally, physically or mentally fatigued.

Employers could substantially decrease absenteeism in their organizations if they reduced work–life conflict. Our calculations indicate that employers could reduce absenteeism in their organization by:

- 24.2% if they eliminated high levels of role overload;
- 6.5% if they eliminated high levels of work to family interference;
- 3.5% if they eliminated high levels of family to work interference; and
- 8.6% if they could eliminate high levels of caregiver strain.

The direct costs of absenteeism due to high work–life conflict are approximately $3 to $5 billion per year: The data collected in this study provide us with the opportunity to estimate the potential financial cost of work–life conflict to Canadian organizations. Our estimates suggested that, in 2001, the direct costs of absenteeism due to work–life conflict are roughly $3 to $5 billion. When both direct and indirect costs are included in the calculations, work–life conflict costs Canadians approximately $4.5 to $10 billion per year. Specifically:

- The direct costs of absenteeism due to high role overload are estimated to be approximately $3 billion per year. Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism due to role overload are estimated to be between $4.5 (conservative estimate) and $6 billion per year.
- The direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of work to family interference are estimated to be almost $1 billion per year in direct costs alone (costs increase to $1.5 to $2 billion if one also includes the indirect costs of this absenteeism).
- The direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of family to work interference are estimated to be just under $0.5 billion a year in direct costs (approximately $1 billion per year when indirect costs are also included in the total).
- The direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of caregiver strain are calculated to be just over $1 billion per year (indirect costs are estimated at another $1 to $2 billion).

Why should families care about work–life conflict?

The data in this report paint a mixed picture with respect to the "health" of the families in which Canadian employees live: On a positive note, the majority of respondents are satisfied with their families and their performance as a parent and engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting several times a week or more. On a more cautionary note, only 38% of respondents are completely satisfied with their family's well-being and only one in four frequently engages in activities which have been linked to family stability.

Women are less satisfied than men with their performance as a parent: Men are more likely than women to indicate that they are satisfied with their abilities as a parent. This gender difference is particularly interesting because women spend more time in child care than men. These findings suggest that many women judge their performance as a parent using outdated and perhaps unrealistic standards (e.g. compare themselves to their own mothers).

Family outcomes decline as family responsibilities increase: In other words, family well-being and stability decline as family responsibilities increase. Neither job type nor sector are associated with any of the family outcomes examined in this study.

High work–life conflict is associated with diminished levels of family and parental satisfaction and impaired family functioning: The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of impaired family functioning (i.e. lower levels of family well-being and stability, poorer performance of parenting roles) and reduced satisfaction with the family domain (lower levels of family life and parental satisfaction). In other words, high work–life conflict negatively affects employees' abilities to enjoy and nurture their families.

Role overload and work to family interference have the most negative impact on the family: In both forms of work–life conflict, employees with high levels of conflict are less satisfied with their family life and their ability to parent, less likely to feel that their families are well (i.e. report lower family adaptation) and less likely to feel that their families are stable and work well together.

Family to work interference is negatively associated with family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being: Surprisingly, employees who put family ahead of work are also less likely than those with low levels of family to work interference to be satisfied with their family lives and their abilities as a parent. They are also less likely to be happy with their family's well-being. In fact, this group reports the lowest levels of family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being in the study. The fact that family to work interference is not associated with family integration suggests that either people who put family ahead of work are doing so to keep their family units intact or the strategy of putting family first maintains family integrity. The costs of this strategy are clear, however—lower levels of satisfaction with the family domain.

Caregiver strain is negatively associated with positive parenting behaviours: Employees with high caregiver strain are less likely to engage in positive parenting behaviour. This suggests that the time and energy devoted to elder care activities are interfering with the time available for one's children.

Why should employees care about work–life conflict?

Many Canadians working for Canada's largest employers are in poor mental health: Over half of the employed Canadians who responded to our survey report high levels of perceived stress; one in three reports high levels of burnout and depressed mood. Only 41% are satisfied with their lives and one in five is dissatisfied. Almost one in five perceives that their physical health is fair or poor. These data are disturbing as they can be considered to be a "best case scenario" and reflect the mental health status of employed Canadians, many (if not virtually all) of whom can be considered to have a "good" job, in one of the "best countries to live in the world!" This begs the following question: If a substantial number of employed Canadians can be considered to be in poor mental health, what is the prevalence of mental health problems in those groups that are considered to be at risk with respect to stress, depression and poor physical health (e.g. contingent workers, the unemployed, those on social assistance)?

The physical and mental health of Canadian employees has deteriorated over time: Overall, the 1990s appears to have been a tough decade for Canadians working for medium and large organizations. Comparison of the 1991 and 2001 samples indicates that the prevalence of high levels of perceived stress and depression in the Canadian labour force has increased in the past decade. In 1991, 44% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of perceived stress; this had increased to 55% with high levels of perceived stress in 2001. In 1991, 24% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of depressed mood compared to 36% in the 2001 sample. This decline in mental health over the past decade is not surprising given the increase in work demands noted in Report One. Taken as a whole, these data suggest that the increase in work demands over the past decade, as well as the proliferation of work–life conflict, are having a negative impact on the mental health of employees.

Women report higher levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood than men: The data are unequivocal—women are more likely than men to report high levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood. The fact that these gender differences were observed when job type, dependent care status and sector of employment are taken into account suggests that such differences have more to do with gender differences in socialization than in either work or non-work demands. These findings may, for example, be due to women being more likely to self-examine their emotional feelings and acknowledge problems with respect to their mental health. Alternatively, it may be that women are less able to cope effectively with multiple stressors within their environment. Finally, these gender differences in mental health may exist because women who work for pay outside of the home have added stressors associated with paid employment to their lives with little concomitant decrease in the stressors associated with their family roles.

Managers and professionals are in better mental and physical health than employees working in clerical, administrative, technical and production positions within the organization: Managers and professionals can be considered to be in better overall mental health (i.e. less likely to be depressed, more likely to be satisfied with their lives) and physical health (i.e. more likely to describe their health as very good to excellent) than employees who occupy blue and pink collar jobs (i.e. clerical, administrative, production positions). This finding is particularly striking given the fact that the managers and professionals in our sample are more likely than the blue and pink collar employees to work long hours, take work home with them and report high role overload, high work to family interference, negative work to family spillover and high job stress—conditions which are generally a recipe for poorer mental health. Taken in concert, these findings suggest that managerial and professional employees are more able than their non-professional counterparts to cope with these higher work demands. These findings are consistent with the literature presented in Report One which suggests that employees in professional positions have a greater perception of control than non-professionals and that it is these higher levels of control that help them cope with heavier work demands. Unfortunately, we still do not know what contributes to this increased sense of control. Possible explanations include better working conditions, more interesting work, higher levels of flexibility, higher job security, increased job mobility (linked to their higher levels of education) and higher socio-economic status (i.e. more formal education, higher incomes). These data also suggest that the physical and mental health issues we observed in the other group may be more a function of their work environment, the types of jobs they do and their working conditions than the time spent in work itself.

Female managers and professionals are more likely than females in "other" positions to report high levels of burnout: The data suggest that managerial and professional positions and motherhood are not compatible in that they both impose heavy demands. Women who work in managerial and professional positions are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout than any other group of employees. These higher levels of burnout can be attributed to the fact that this group of women appears to be in a "no win" situation with respect to work and family—they have heavier work demands than other women and heavier family demands than men. In other words, female managers and professionals are more likely than workers in any other group to try to "burn the candle at both ends"—succeed at a high-level job while not sacrificing standards at home. Such a strategy appears to be unsustainable over time.

Employees who have no dependent care responsibilities are in better physical and mental health than employed Canadians who spend time each week in child and/or elder care: The data are also unequivocal with respect to the impact of parenthood and/or elder care on employee physical and mental health. The greater the number of non-work demands assumed by an employee, the more likely they are to report that they are stressed, burnt out and that their health is fair or poor. In other words, the job of parent/elder caregiver can be considered to be a high-demand, low-control position—one which we know challenges an individual's ability to cope. Individuals or couples without children or elder care responsibilities can act relatively independently as they do not have the constraints or the demands of caring for children or elderly dependents. The addition of the parent/elder caregiver role complicates an employee's life situation as it places greater demands on them at the same time as it adds constraints. These data suggest that efforts to more proactively manage a more diverse workforce and implement policies and programs to help working mothers and fathers and those with elder care issues have had no appreciable impact on this group of employees.

Motherhood presents more mental health challenges than fatherhood: Parenthood appears to have a different impact on the life satisfaction of mothers than fathers. Fatherhood is not associated with life satisfaction for men. Mothers, however, are less satisfied with their lives than women without children. Similar findings were observed with respect to depressed mood. Mothers are more likely to report high depressed mood than women without children/elder care. Having either child care or elder care responsibilities is not, however, associated with depressed mood for men. These findings support the research literature in the area which suggests that the role of working mother is qualitatively different from the role of working father and that the "quality" of motherhood as a role is not as high as fatherhood (i.e. dads do the "fun" family tasks while mothers do the "hard stuff"). Further research is needed to determine if these differences are due to social, workplace or family factors (or some combination) so that targeted policies are developed and supports implemented. More equitable sharing of childrearing within the family may lead to better mental health outcomes for working mothers.

Men who work in the public sector report poorer mental health: Men in the public sector sample appear to be exposed to a fairly unique set of stressors. They are more likely than any other group of men to report high perceived stress and depressed mood and less likely to report that they are satisfied with their lives. Further research is needed to determine what conditions within the public sector work environment are impairing the mental health of these men.

High work–life conflict is associated with declines in employee physical and mental health: The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of physical and mental health problems at the employee level. Employees who are stressed, depressed and burnt out are not as productive as those in good mental health. Perceived stress, depression and burnout are also linked to increased absenteeism, greater use of prescription medicines and employee assistance programs, and lower levels of creativity, innovation and risk taking, which, in turn, can all be expected to negatively affect an organization's bottom line.

The four components of work–life conflict have differential impacts on the physical and mental health of employees: These differences are worthy of note in that they provide quite different motivations for addressing this issue as well as different prescriptions with respect to change.

- *Employees with low levels of role overload are in better mental health:* Respondents with low role overload appear to be in the best mental and physical health of any of the respondents in the survey. Only 20% of those with low role overload report high stress, only 4% are burnt out and only 14% report high levels of depressed mood. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents with low role overload indicate that they are very satisfied with their lives. These data suggest that the mental health of employed Canadians would be significantly improved if organizations ensured that work demands were more manageable (i.e. hired more staff, reduced travel demands, put limits on the use of technology to support after-hours work).
- *Employees with high levels of role overload are more likely to report high levels of burnout:* Role overload is positively associated with perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood, and negatively associated with life satisfaction and perceived physical health. Examination of the data indicates that employees with high role overload are 12 times more likely than those with low role overload to report high levels of burnout. These findings indicate that the long hours that employers expect from their workforce are not sustainable over time.
- *Work to family interference is associated with higher levels of perceived stress, depressed mood and burnout:* The respondents with high work to family interference can be considered to be "at risk" with respect to burnout and perceived stress (62% of the respondents with high work to family interference report high levels of burnout and 77% report high levels of perceived stress). Employees with high work to family interference are 5.6 times more likely than those with low levels of work to family interference to report high levels of burnout, 2.4 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood and 2.2 times as likely to report high levels of perceived stress. These findings suggest that the strategy of "trying to do it all" and "meeting heavy demands at work at the expense of one's personal life" impairs one's mental health.
- *Family to work interference is less problematic for employees than other forms of work–life conflict:* The alternative strategy—putting family ahead of work—does not appear to be as harmful to one's mental health as putting work ahead of family. It is, however, still cause for concern.
- *Employees with high caregiver strain are most likely to be depressed:* Respondents with high levels of caregiver strain appear to be at the highest risk with respect to perceived stress (80% with high caregiver strain report high stress), depressed mood (60% with high caregiver strain report high depressed mood) and impaired physical health (28% with high caregiver strain report that their health is fair or poor). They are also the least likely to be satisfied with their lives.

Recommendations

There is no "one size fits all" solution to the issue of work–life conflict. The data from this study show quite clearly that different policies, practices and strategies will be needed to reduce each of the five components of work–life conflict: role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference, caregiver strain and negative work to family spillover. That being said, the data indicate that there are a number of strategies and approaches that the various stakeholders in this issue (i.e. employers, employees, families, unions and governments) can use to reduce work–life conflict. Thirty-nine such recommendations are provided in the main body of the report. The recommendations fall into two broad groupings: reduce demands (at either work or home) or increase the amount of control the employee has over the work–life interface. Either of these strategies should yield positive results. These recommendations are summarized below.

What can employers do?

Employers who wish to address work–life balance need to:

1. identify ways of reducing employee workloads. Special attention needs to be given to reducing the workloads of managers and professionals in all sectors.
2. recognize that unrealistic work demands are not sustainable over time and come at a cost to the organization which is often not recognized or tracked. Accordingly, we recommend that the employer start recording the costs of understaffing and overwork.
3. identify ways to reduce the amount of time employees spend in job-related travel.
4. hire more people in those areas where the organization is overly reliant on unpaid overtime.

5. collect data which reflect the total costs of delivering high quality work on time (i.e. paid and unpaid overtime, subsequent turnover, employee assistance program use, absenteeism).

6. change their accountability frameworks and reward structures.

7. tangibly reward and recognize overtime work.

8. develop an etiquette around the use of office technologies (e.g. laptops, email, cell phones)

9. make alternative work arrangements more widely available within their organization.

10. reduce their reliance on both paid and unpaid overtime.

11. give employees the opportunity to say "no" when asked to work overtime. Saying "no" should not be a career-limiting move.

12. implement time off in lieu of overtime pay arrangements.

13. provide a limited number of days of paid leave per year for child care, elder care or personal problems.

14. provide appropriate support for their employees who work rotating shifts.

15. measure the use of the different supportive policies and reward those sections of the organization that demonstrate best practices in these areas. Investigate those areas where use is low.

16. implement cafeteria benefits packages which allow employees to select those benefits which are most appropriate for their personal situation on a yearly basis.

17. offer child care and elder care referral services.

What can employees do?

Employees should:

18. say "no" to overtime hours if work expectations are unreasonable.

19. try to limit the amount of work they take home to complete in the evenings. If they do take work home, they should make every effort to separate time spent in work from family time (i.e. do work after the children go to bed, have a home office).

20. try to reduce the amount of time they spend in job-related travel.

21. take advantage of the flexible work arrangements available in their organization.

What can governments do?

To reduce work–life conflict within their constituencies, governments (federal, provincial and municipal) need to:

22. implement legislation:
    - which stipulates that an employer's management rights do not include an implied right to require an employee to work overtime except in the case of an emergency,
    - that gives employees the right to time off in lieu of overtime pay,
    - that entitles employees to up to five days of paid personal leave per year, and
    - includes specific language around long-term unpaid leave for the care of an elderly dependent.

23. take the lead with respect to the issue of child care by determining how to best help employed Canadians deal with child care issues (i.e. develop appropriate policies for parents of children of various ages, identify and implement relevant supports).

24. take the lead with respect to the issue of elder care by determining how to best help employed Canadians deal with elder care issues (i.e. develop appropriate policies, identify and implement relevant supports).

25. "lead by example" with respect to the availability and accessibility of flexible work arrangements and supportive policies.

26. investigate ways to increase Canadians' awareness of how social roles and responsibilities have changed over the past several decades, what changes still need to happen, and why (e.g. social marketing campaign, education programs in schools, advertisements).

27. examine how they can reduce the "financial penalties" associated with parenthood (i.e. determine how to concretely recognize that this group of employees has higher costs).

What can unions do?

Unions need to:

28. become advocates of employee work–life balance by undertaking public campaigns to raise awareness of work–life issues and suggest ways in which the situation can be improved. This advocacy should be done outside the collective bargaining process.

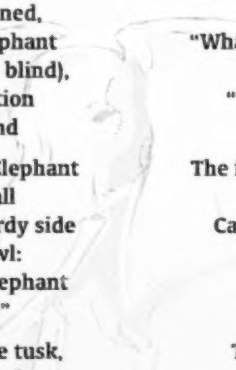
29. Include work–life provisions (e.g. flexible work arrangements, family-friendly benefits) in negotiations during the collective bargaining process with the objective of gaining new accommodations in collective agreements.

30. Set up educational campaigns to:

    - increase individual workers' knowledge of work–life balance issue, and
    - give employees the tools they need to effectively deal with situations as they arise.

Chapter 1
Introduction

The Blind Men and the Elephant
by John Godfrey Saxe



**It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind**

**The first approached the Elephant
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! But the Elephant
Is very like a WALL!"**

**The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! What have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me t'is mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a SPEAR!"**

**The third approached the animal
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a SNAKE!"**

**The fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain" quoth he,
"This clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a TREE!"**

**The fifth who chanced to touch the ear
Said "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a FAN!"**

**The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope
Than seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a ROPE!"**

**And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each were partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong?**

What is work-life conflict? Much like the blind men and the elephant, conclusions about the prevalence and impact of work-life conflict depends very much on how it is defined and how it is measured. To get a comprehensive view of work-life conflict and to understand its effects, one has to examine the phenomena from a number of different angles. Otherwise, just like the blind men in the poem above, we will jump to the wrong conclusions with respect to the prevalence of work-life conflict within the Canadian workforce at this time, its impact and who is at risk.

1.1 What Is Work[7]–Life Conflict?

We all play many roles: employee, manager, spouse, parent, child, sibling, friend and community member. Each of these roles imposes demands on us which require time, energy and commitment to fulfill. Work-family or work-life conflict[8] occurs when the cumulative demands of these many work and non-work roles are incompatible in some respect so that participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in the other role.[9]

Work–life conflict broadly defined in this study

Various theoretical frameworks are used in the research literature to look at the relationship between work and life. The most well-known of these models include role conflict and role spillover. Briefly, the role conflict model is based on the assumption that the more roles one occupies the higher the potential for stress and strain due to the incompatibility of the demands imposed by the different roles and the fact that the different responsibilities compete for time and energy (i.e. role overload, role interference). Spillover theory, on the other hand, postulates that the experiences an individual has when performing one set of roles has an impact on their performance of other roles (i.e. work to family spillover). While spillover can, in theory, be either positive or negative, most research in this area is based on the assumption that spillover is undesirable. This body of research often talks about "role strain," which refers to the negative interference an employee experiences when the demands associated with one domain affect their performance in the other domain (i.e. caregiver strain).

This report conceptualizes work–life conflict broadly to include role overload, role interference, work to family spillover and caregiver strain. A working definition for each of these constructs is given in Box 1.

Box 1

Defining Work–Life Conflict

Five forms of work–life conflict are examined in this study: role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference, work to family spillover, and caregiver strain. The working definition of each of these constructs is given below.

Role Overload is having too much to do in a given amount of time. This form of work–life conflict occurs when the total demands on time and energy associated with the prescribed activities of multiple roles are too great to perform the roles adequately or comfortably.

Role Interference occurs when incompatible demands make it difficult, if not impossible, for an employee to perform all roles well. Role interference is conceptualized as having two distinct facets:

- ▲ **Work to Family Interference:** This type of role interference occurs when work demands and responsibilities make it more difficult to fulfill family role responsibilities.
- ▲ **Family to Work Interference:** This type of role interference occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult to fulfill work role responsibilities.

Caregiver Strain: The term "caregiver" refers to anyone who provides assistance to someone else who needs it (e.g. disabled or elderly dependent, children with disabilities). Caregiver strain is a multidimensional construct which is defined in terms of changes in the caregivers' day-to-day lives which can be attributed to the need to provide care (Robinson, 1983). Four types of caregiver strains resulting from stress have been identified: emotional strain (i.e. depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion), physical strain, financial strain, and family strain. It should be noted that research on caregiver strain has typically focused on strains associated with the provision of elder care or care for a dependent with disabilities rather than those linked to child care itself. Consistent with past practices, in this study caregiver strain was used to measure strain and burden associated with elder care only.

Work to Family Spillover arises when work experiences impact an employee's ability to perform non-work roles. Traditionally, researchers have assumed that work will have a negative impact on family (i.e. negative spillover between domains). The concept of spillover included in this study is more comprehensive in that it allows for the possibility that conditions at work might have a positive, a negative, or no impact on the family.

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[7] Throughout this paper, the term "work" refers to paid employment.

[8] From the 1970s through to the early 1990s, researchers studied work–family conflict. In the late 1990s, the term was changed to "work–life" conflict in recognition of the fact that employees' non-work responsibilities can take many forms including volunteer pursuits and education, as well as the care of children or elderly dependents.

[9] We sometimes use the term work–life balance in this report to mean the opposite of work–life conflict. This reflects the fact that the concept of conflict and balance are frequently viewed as a continuum. Employees with low work–life conflict/high work–life balance are at one end of the continuum while those with high work–life conflict/low work–life balance are at the other.

Role interference is conceptualized in this study to consist of two factors: family to work interference and work to family interference. In the first case, interference occurs when family-role responsibilities hinder performance at work (e.g. a child's illness prevents attendance at work; conflict at home makes concentration at work difficult). In the second case, interference arises when work demands make it harder for an employee to fulfill his or her family responsibilities (e.g. long hours in paid work prevent attendance at a child's sporting event; preoccupation with the work role prevents active enjoyment of family life; work stresses spill over into the home environment and increase conflict with the family).

In other words, work–life conflict is defined in this report as having two major components: the practical aspects associated with time crunches and scheduling conflicts (i.e. role interference, role spillover), and the perceptual aspect of feeling overwhelmed, overloaded or stressed by the pressures of multiple roles (i.e. role overload, caregiver strain).

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The overall objectives of this research initiative have been articulated in the foreword to this report. This report has the following general objectives:

1. Quantify the issues associated with balancing work and family in the year 2001 and compare the situation today to that of 10 years earlier.
2. Quantify the benefits (to employers, employees and Canadian families) of achieving work–life balance.
3. Quantify the costs (to employees, employers and Canadian families) of work–life conflict.

Answers to the following specific questions are provided in this report:

- How prevalent are the various forms of work–life conflict in Canada at this time (reference year of 2001)?
- Has the prevalence of the various forms of work–life conflict changed over the past decade?
- What is the impact of the various forms of work–life conflict on:
  - Canadian organizations?
  - Canadian families?
  - Canadian employees?
- How does gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status affect these issues?

1.3 Why Do We Need a Study Like This One?

Our research (and the research of others) indicates that the inability to balance work and family is "everyone's problem." From the employer's perspective, the inability to balance work and family demands has been linked to reduced work performance, increased absenteeism, higher turnover, lower commitment and poorer morale (see Report One for literature to support this argument). Work–life conflict has also been linked to productivity decreases associated with lateness, unscheduled days off, emergency time off, excessive use of the telephone, missed meetings, and difficulty concentrating on the job. A recent study by the authors of this report estimated the direct cost of absenteeism in Canadian firms due to an inability to balance work and life at just under $3 billion per year (Duxbury, Higgins and Johnson, 2000). This same study determined that employees with high work–life conflict missed an average of 13.2 days of work per year—substantially higher than the 5.9 days missed by employees with low work–life conflict.

Conflict between work and family demands is also a problem for employees and their families. Our research links high work–life conflict to marital problems, reduced family and life satisfaction, and an increased incidence of perceived stress, burnout, depression (measured as depressed mood in our research) and stress-related illnesses. In addition to the above, employees with family obligations often miss career opportunities when they need to put their family responsibilities ahead of their work. Fatigue, work-related accidents and repetitive strain injuries have all been linked to long hours of work.

Other research suggests that society will benefit if employees are able to devote more time and energy to their roles of parent, neighbour and volunteer. Both families and communities will benefit if people have the time and energy to develop meaningful relationships with their neighbours and actively participate in the lives of their spouses and children. As the Vanier Institute (2000, p. 84) stated:

> "Each person in the labour force, when considered as a family member, is a vital strand in the web of relationships that sustain not just the economy but also our families, our communities and our nation."

Finally, caregiver strain has been found to be significantly related to psychological distress and the health of the caregiver. Research has linked high levels of caregiver strain to increased levels of depression, anxiety, fatigue, anger, family conflict, guilt, self-blame, emotional strain and sleep loss. It has also been linked to financial problems, psychosomatic disorders, health problems and feelings of isolation.[10]

To what extent is work–life conflict a problem in Canada? What progress has been made in this area? The answers to these questions are not clear. Anecdotally, we know that people are having more difficulties balancing work and life. The popular press and the media have been preoccupied over the past several years with things such as the "time crunch," "going back to a simpler lifestyle" and "coping with stress." In Report One, we argued that work–life conflict increased throughout the 1990s as:

- Canadian employees assumed more responsibilities outside of work (e.g. the number of dual-earner and single-parent families), sandwich employees (e.g. employees with both child care and elder care responsibilities) and employees who had responsibility for elder care increased over the past decade, and
- labour market changes (e.g. employers downsized, rightsized and restructured) and technological changes increased job insecurity, elevated work demands and blurred the boundary between work and family.

It would appear that there is a real need for change in this area—but the question remains: "How does one motivate this change?" Many organizations have, for decades, ignored the moral case for change. Current accounting practices mean that the bottom line "costs" of organizational inaction with respect to work and family (e.g. reduced productivity, higher use of employee assistance programs, greater turnover, higher absenteeism) often go unrecognized. The main objective of this report, therefore, is to empirically make the case for change. It does this in two ways. First, it quantifies the prevalence of various forms of work–life conflict. Second, it reveals the "hidden" costs of imbalance to key stakeholders (e.g. employees, families, organizations and governments) and the costs of inaction. In other words, the data presented in this report can be used to make the business case for change.

What will likely happen if Canadian organizations and governments do not deal with the issue of work–life conflict? What are the ramifications for the employee? For Canadian families? For Canadian organizations' ability to compete globally? Again, the answers to these questions remain unavailable to key decision makers. It is clear, however, that the need to address this issue has increased in the new millennium as an impending labour shortage and changing attitudes toward work make it more difficult for organizations to recruit and retain workers. These changes have provided a powerful impetus for companies to turn to more flexible, family-friendly and supportive workplaces as a means of retaining and energizing key employees and meeting strategic objectives. It is hoped that the data presented in this study will give them additional reasons to address this issue.

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[10] See, for example, work by Brody et al., 1983, 1986, 1987, 1995; Chapman et al., 1994; and Burffardi et al., 1999.

Chapter 2

Methodology

The methodology section is divided into three parts. Information on the sample is presented first. This is followed by a brief discussion of the statistical techniques used in this analysis. The section concludes with an outline of the reporting protocols followed throughout the report.

2.1 Who Responded to the "National Study on Balancing Work, Family and Lifestyle?"

The sample for the "National Study on Balancing Work, Family and Lifestyle" was drawn from 100 Canadian companies with 500+ employees. Forty of these organizations operated in the private sector, 22 were from the public sector and 38 were from the not-for-profit (NFP) sector. Private sector companies from the following sectors were included in the sample: telecommunications, high technology, retail, transportation, pharmaceutical, financial services, entertainment, natural resources and manufacturing. The public sector sample included 7 municipal governments, 7 provincial government departments, and 8 federal government departments/agencies. The NFP sector sample consisted of 15 hospitals/district health councils, 10 school boards, 8 universities and colleges, and 5 "other" organizations that could best be classified as NFP/greater public sector (e.g. social service, charity, protective services).

A total of 31,571 people responded to the survey. The sample is distributed as follows:

- Just under half (46%) of the respondents work in the public sector. One in three works in the NFP sector and 20% are employed by a private sector company.
- Just over half (55%) of the respondents are women.
- Just under half (46%) work in managerial and professional positions, 40% work in non-professional positions (e.g. clerical, administrative, retail, production) and 14% work in technical jobs.
- Just over half (56%) of the respondents have dependent care responsibilities (e.g. spend an hour or more a week in either child care or elder care). The rest (44%) do not.

A full description of the sample can be found in Report One. Key details which may be of interest to the readers of this report are given below.

Demographic profile of respondents

The 2001 study sample is well distributed with respect to age, region, community size, job type, education, personal income, family income, and family's financial well-being. In many ways, the demographic characteristics of the sample correspond to national data, suggesting that the results from this research can be generalized beyond this study. Approximately half of the respondents to the survey can be considered to be highly educated male and female knowledge workers. Most respondents are part of a dual-income family and indicate that they are able to "live comfortably" (but not luxuriously) on two full-time incomes. Respondents who belong to a traditional, male breadwinner family are in the minority (5% of total sample, 11% of the sample of men) and outnumbered by respondents who are single parents. The fact that the traditional families tended to be headed by highly paid male managers and professionals suggests that this family arrangement is restricted to those with higher incomes.

The sample includes a substantial number of employees who may be at risk with respect to work–life conflict. The mean age of the respondents to this survey is 42.8 years which puts them in the mid-career/fast-track stage of the career cycle, the "full-nest" stage of the life cycle and the 40s transition stage of adult development. Each of these stages is associated with increased stress and greater work and family demands. Three quarters of the respondents to this survey are presently married or living with a significant other and 69% are part of a dual-income family. Eleven percent of the respondents are single parents. Twelve percent of the sample live in rural areas. One in three is a clerical or administrative employee with a lower level of formal education (e.g. reduced job mobility) and lower personal and family incomes. One quarter of the respondents indicates that money is tight in their family; 29% of respondents earn less than $40,000 per year and just over one quarter live in families with total family incomes that were less than the Canadian average. One in three of the respondents has a high school education or less.

2.2 Methodology

A 12-page survey produced in a mark sensitive format with a unique bar code given to each organization participating in the study was used to collect the data. This survey was divided into nine sections: your job; your manager; time management; work, family and personal life; work arrangements; work environment; family; physical and mental health; and "information about you." Virtually all of the scales used in the questionnaire are psychometrically sound measures that have been well validated in other studies. The following types of analysis were undertaken to meet the research objectives outlined above:

- **Prevalence of Work–Life Conflict:** One of the key objectives of this study was to estimate, using our sample, the prevalence of the various forms of work–life conflict in the Canadian workforce. The interested reader can find full details on the measures used to quantify work–life conflict in this study in Box 2. The procedure used to estimate the percentage of the sample who reported high, moderate and low levels of work–life conflict on each of these constructs is outlined in Box 3.

Box 2

Measurement of Work–Life Conflict

Role Overload was assessed in this study using five items from a scale developed by Bohen and Viveros-Long (1981). Role overload was calculated as the summed average of these five items. High scores indicate greater role overload. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.88.

Work to Family Interference was measured by means of a five-item Likert scale developed by Gutek, Searle and Kelpa (1991). Work to family interference was calculated as the summed average of these five items. High scores indicate higher levels of perceived interference. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.92.

Family to Work Interference was assessed by means of a five-item Likert scale developed by Gutek, Searle and Kelpa (1991). Family to work interference was calculated as the summed average of these five items. High scores indicate higher levels of perceived interference. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.87.

Caregiver Strain was quantified using a modified four-item version of Robinson's (1983) Caregiver Strain Index (CSI). This index measures objective (rather than subjective) burden in four areas. Respondents were asked to indicate (using a five-point Likert scale) how often they had difficulty in caring for an elderly relative or dependent because of physical strains, financial strains or because it left them feeling completely overwhelmed. Options given included never, monthly, weekly, several days per week or daily. Total caregiver strain was calculated as the summed average of these three items. Higher scores indicate greater strain. This measure has been used in a number of studies with good results (Robinson reports a Cronbach alpha of 0.91). In this study, the Cronbach alpha was 0.78.

Work to Family Spillover was measured using a scale developed by Duxbury and Higgins in 1995. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they perceived their work had affected eight family factors (i.e. time with partner, time with children, time in elder care, relationship with partner, relationship with children, sharing of family responsibilities, time in leisure, time in volunteer activities). A five-point Likert scale (1 = negative impact, 3 = no impact, 5 = positive impact) was used to gather the responses. Work to family spillover was calculated as the summed average of the eight items. Responses on individual items were also examined. This measure has been used extensively by Duxbury and Higgins in their research and displays good reliability and validity. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.87.

Box 3

High Versus Low Work–Life Conflict

Role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference and caregiver strain were all operationalized using multi-item measures (see Box 2). To determine who scored high versus low on each of these constructs, we followed the following steps:

- calculated overall role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference, caregiver strain and work to family spillover scores (the summed average of the items making up the measure);
- used population norms to divide the sample into three groups (high, moderate and low) on the basis of the respondent's overall role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference score and caregiver strain (see Duxbury and Higgins, 1998 for a discussion of this procedure); and
- divided the sample into three groups (negative impact, no impact, positive impact) on the basis of their response to the work to family spillover items.

- **The Impact of Work–Life Conflict:** A second objective of this research was to look at the impact of high work–life conflict on the organization, the family and the employee. In order to meet this objective, we included in the survey instrument a number of well-established scales which allowed us to quantify key organizational attitudes and outcomes (see Box 4), family outcomes (see Box 5) and employee outcomes (see Box 6). The procedures used to examine the impact of work–life conflict on each of these attitudes and outcomes are shown in Box 7.
- **Changes in key outcomes over time:** A third objective of this study was to approximate how key attitudes and outcomes have changed over time. To allow such a comparison, many of the survey measures that were used in our 1991 national work–life study were incorporated into the 2001 questionnaire. To make the comparison a fair one, we limited this comparison to employees who worked full time and had some form of dependent care responsibilities (time in work and time in non-work activities correlated to many of the key outcomes). Over 20,000 respondents in both the 1991 and 2001 samples met these criteria. Statistical analysis indicates that differences between the two time periods of 1% or more are statistically significant (p = 0.0001).
- **Examination of the impact of gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment on key attitudes and outcomes:** Research done in this area suggests that gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment might all influence the attitudes and outcomes included in this study (see Report One for a summary of this literature). The procedure used to examine between-group differences is summarized in Box 8.

Box 4

Measurement of Organizational Attitudes and Outcomes

Organizational Commitment refers to loyalty to the employing organization. The nine-item short form of the Job Commitment Scale developed by Mowday et al. (1979) was used in both the 1991 and 2001 studies to measure commitment. High scores indicate greater commitment to the department. In our study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.90.

Job Satisfaction is the degree to which employees have a positive affective orientation toward employment. While the "facet-specific" measure of satisfaction developed by Quinn and Staines (1979) was used in both the 1991 and 2001 studies to measure job satisfaction, four additional items were included in the 2001 survey. The examination of changes in job satisfaction over time was restricted to the five items that appeared in both surveys (i.e. satisfaction with job in general, their pay, their work hours, their work schedule and their work tasks). High scores on this scale represent greater job satisfaction. In our study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.81 for the five-item measure and 0.88 for the 9-item measure.

Job Stress is viewed in terms of the incompatibility of work demands. It was assessed in both 1991 and 2001 using the Job Tension subscale of Rizzo et al.'s (1970) Work Stress Scale. Responses are on a five-point scale and a summed average score is calculated such that a high score indicates high job stress. In our study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.87.

Intent to Turnover is defined as an individual's desire to leave an organization. This survey used a measure developed by Duxbury and Higgins for use in this study to examine both intent to turnover and motivations to leave. Intent to turnover was measured by asking respondents to indicate how often in the last six months they had thought about leaving their current organization to work elsewhere. Options given included never, monthly, weekly, several days per week or daily. Respondents were also given a list of 11 reasons for leaving their current employer and asked to indicate all that applied to them. Responses were recorded as yes (would leave for this reason) or no (would not leave for this reason).

Rating of Organization as a Place to Work measures an employee's overall impression of their employer. This measure, which was developed by Duxbury and Higgins for use in this study, asked respondents "Overall, how would you rate your organization as a place to work?" Responses included: One of the best, Above average, Average, Below average or One of the worst.

Absenteeism was measured by asking respondents: "In the past six months, how many days have you:" (1) been unable to work or carry out your usual activities because of health problems? (this item was drawn from the Health and Daily Living Form (HDL) (Moos, Cronkite, Billings & Finney, 1988), (2) been unable to work or carry out your usual activities because of children-related problems? (3) been unable to work or carry out your usual activities because of problems concerning elderly relatives?, and (4) taken a day off because you were emotionally, physically or mentally fatigued? Responses were collected on a scale that ranged from 0 days to 10 or more days. Three levels of absenteeism were calculated: those with zero absenteeism, those with low absenteeism (less than three days in a six-month period) and those with high absenteeism (three or more days in a six-month period).

Box 5

Measurement of Family Outcomes

Family Adaptation is defined as occurring when family members use their strengths and capabilities to reduce the demands of the situation, promote individual development of members, and achieve a sense of congruency in family functioning. Families high in family adaptation have a general sense of physical and psychological family health that is referred to as family well-being. The four-item Family Adaptation Scale (FAS) developed by Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) was used in this study to measure family adaption. A five-point Likert scale was used for responses (1 = not satisfied, 3 = moderately satisfied, 5 = completely satisfied). Higher scores reflect higher family adaptation. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.86.

Family Life Satisfaction is defined as overall satisfaction with family relationships. The Kansas Family Life Satisfaction scale developed by Schumm, Jurich and Bollman (1986) was used to measure family satisfaction in this study. The original three-item measure (satisfaction with family life, relationship with children and relationship with spouse) was augmented with two additional items (satisfaction with relationship with your parents and your relationship with your in-laws). A five-point Likert scale was used for responses (1 = not satisfied, 3 = moderately satisfied, 5 = completely satisfied). Family satisfaction was calculated as the summed average of the five items with higher scores reflecting higher family satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha of this measure in our study was 0.75.

Parental Satisfaction is defined to be perceived satisfaction with the parenting role and one's ability as a parent. The three-item Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale developed by Schumm (see James et al., 1985) was used in this study to quantify parental satisfaction. Respondents were asked to indicate, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = not satisfied, 3 = moderately satisfied, 5 = completely satisfied), how satisfied they were with their relationship with their children, the behaviour of their children and themselves as a parent. We included one additional item in this measure (satisfaction with partner's relationship with their children). Parental satisfaction was calculated as the summed average of the four items. Higher scores reflect higher parental satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in our study was 0.83.

Positive Parenting. The National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth has identified a number of behaviours which appear to be associated with positive parenting. Five of these behaviours were included in this study. A five-point Likert scale was used to collect the responses (1 = never, 2 = monthly, 3 = weekly, 4 = several days per week, 5 = daily). Positive parenting was calculated as the summed average of the five items. Higher scores indicate that the respondent perceives that they engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting more frequently. In our study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.87.

Family Integration is defined in terms of the stability of the family unit and the amount of security family members get by being part of the family and participating with the family in joint activities and functions. An abbreviated five-item version of the Family Integration Scale (FIS) developed by Sebald and Andrews (1962) was used in this study to measure family integration. A five-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = monthly, 3 = weekly, 4 = several days per week, 5 = daily) was used to collect responses. Family integration was calculated as the summed average of the five items. High scores reflect higher family integration. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.77.

Box 6

Measurement of Employee Outcomes

Perceived Stress was measured in both studies by means of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein, 1983). The PSS was designed to assess appraisals of the extent to which one's current life situation is unpredictable, uncontrollable and burdensome. Higher scores on this measure indicate greater levels of perceived stress. Population norms are used to interpret the scores. Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was 0.88.

Depressed Mood was measured using a scale developed by Moos et al. (1988). These authors defined depressed mood (DM) as a state characterized by low affect and energy, and persistent feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Higher scores indicate higher levels of depressive symptomatology. Population norms are used to interpret the scores. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was 0.85.

Burnout as defined here is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion which is often found in those who have involvement with people in emotionally demanding situations. Chronic daily stresses rather than unique critical life events are regarded as central factors in producing burnout. Burnout was operationalized in this study through the use of six items from the Burnout Inventory developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986). Higher scores on this measure indicate greater levels of burnout. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was 0.91.

Life Satisfaction was operationalized in both the 1991 and 2001 surveys using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985). The SWLS was designed to measure the respondent's global life satisfaction. Higher scores indicate greater levels of life satisfaction. In our study, the Cronbach alpha was .89.

Perceived Physical Health was quantified using the following question from the Health and Daily Living Form (HDL) (Moos, Cronkite, Billings & Finney, 1988): "Compared to other people your age, how would you describe your usual state of physical health?" A five-point Likert scale was used to collect responses. Response choices included Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent. Higher scores indicate that the respondent perceives themselves to be in better physical health.

Box 7

Methodology Used to Examine the Impact of Work–Life Conflict

This report looks at the impact of high work–life conflict in three domains:

- ▲ Organizational Attitudes and Outcomes (see Box 4)
- ▲ Family Outcomes (see Box 5)
- ▲ Employee Outcomes (see Box 6)

In all cases, well-established scales from the literature were used to quantify each of the attitudes and outcomes being examined. Population norms were used to divide the sample into three groups: those who had high scores on the construct of interest, those who had moderate scores and those who had low scores (see Duxbury and Higgins, 1998 for a discussion of this procedure). Chi square analysis was used to test for significance between groups. In most cases, the Chi square was a three by three analysis: high, medium and low work–life conflict versus high, medium and low attitude/outcome. With dichotomous variables (i.e. yes, no), the analysis was a three by two Chi square. Only part of these analyses is shown in the report (i.e. we show the proportion with high and low scores on the construct of interest but not the proportion with a medium score). Given the large sample sizes, almost all differences were significant. To ensure that differences were substantive (i.e. worthy of note) as well as significant, we focus here on variations that are significant at the $p<0.0001$ level.

Box 8

Methodology Used to Examine the Impact of Gender, Job Type, Dependent Care Status and Sector of Employment

This paper examines how key contextual factors such as gender, job type, dependent care status and sector affect work–life conflict. It also explores the association between these contextual factors and the attitudes and outcomes under study. These contextual factors were operationalized as follows:

- ▲ **Gender:** male versus female
- ▲ **Job Type:** managers and professionals versus clerical, administrative, technical and production positions (referred to as "other" in this report)
- ▲ **Dependent Care:** employees who spend one or more hours per week in child care and/or elder care versus employees who spend zero time per week in these types of activities
- ▲ **Sector of Employment:** public sector versus private sector versus not-for-profit (NFP) sector

This research series takes a fairly unique approach to the analysis of gender impacts on work–life conflict by examining gender differences within job type, dependent care status and sector of employment. Such an analysis recognizes that Canadian men and women have different realities and that it may be these realities, rather than gender itself, that have an impact on the attitudes and outcomes being examined in this analysis. This type of analysis should be invaluable to policy makers who need to know if supports and interventions should be targeted to a particular group (e.g. women, parents) or an environmental condition (e.g. low-control jobs). Crosstab procedures were used to determine if the effect of job type, employment sector and dependent care status on the outcome of interest was the same for men and women.

2.3 Reporting Protocols Followed in This Report

All of the differences discussed in the report meet two criteria: they are statistically significant and substantive (i.e. the differences matter in a practical sense). This second requirement was necessary as the large sample sizes meant that differences as small as 0.5% were often statistically significant. In interpreting the data, the reader should use the following rule of thumb: the greater the difference, the more important the finding. To make the report more readable, not all significant and substantive between-group differences in the data are discussed. The following rule of thumb was applied in deciding which differences are worthy of note:

- four-way comparisons: differences of 3% or greater are noted; and
- six-way comparisons (i.e. sector of employment): differences of 5% or greater are noted.

Finally, it should also be noted that the numbers reported in the text have been rounded off to the whole number.

Chapter 3

Work–Life Conflict in Canada in 2001

This section addresses the following questions:

- How prevalent are the various forms of work–life conflict in Canadian workplaces?
- Has the prevalence of work–life conflict changed over the past decade?
- What is the impact of gender, job type, dependent care and sector of employment on the prevalence of the various forms of work–life conflict?

The data discussed in this section of the report can be found in Appendix A.

This chapter is divided into six sections. Role overload is addressed in section 3.1. This is followed by a discussion of work to family interference (section 3.2) and family to work interference (section 3.3). Data on caregiver strain are reviewed in section 3.4 while section 3.5 focuses on work to family spillover. A summary of the key findings with regard to the prevalence of work–life conflict is provided in section 3.6.

3.1 Role Overload

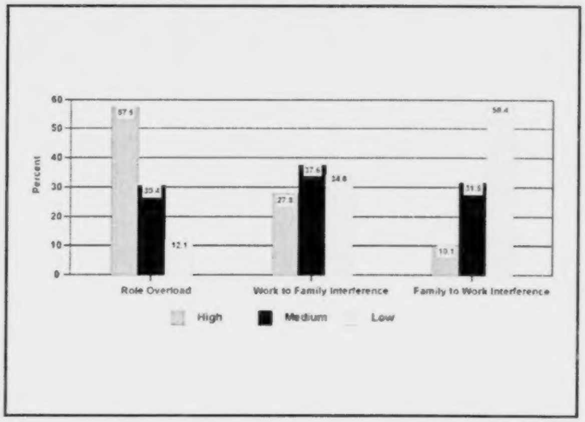
A majority of the Canadians working at larger firms are overloaded

Examination of the role overload data indicate that the majority of Canadians who work for firms employing 500 or more people are overloaded. The data shown in Figure 2 indicate that 58% of the employed Canadians who responded to our survey report high role overload (i.e. have too much to do in the time available).[11] Another 30% report moderate levels of role overload. Only 12% of those in our sample report low levels of role overload.

Role overload has increased over the past decade

Data comparing the percentage of those in the 1991 sample with high role overload to the percentage with high role overload in 2001 are shown in Figure 3. These data indicate that the proportion of Canadians with high role overload has increased dramatically in the past 10 years (47% in 1991 vs. 58% in 2001). These findings are consistent with the findings presented in Report One showing that the amount of time Canadians are devoting to paid employment has increased dramatically over the same time period. Other data from the 2001 survey suggest that much of this increase in role overload can be linked to new information and communications technology (e.g. laptops, email, cell phones), organizational norms that still reward long hours at the office rather than performance, and organizational anorexia (downsizing has meant there are too few employees to do the work).

Figure 2
Prevalence of Work-Life Conflict in 2001



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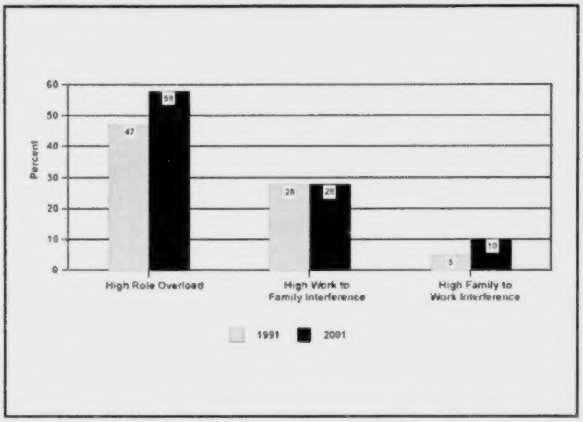
[11] Note: In some Tables and Figures where percentages should total 100, the totals may not add exactly to 100 due to rounding.

Figure 3
Change in Prevalence of Work-Life Conflict Over Time



Women report higher levels of role overload than men

The data reviewed in this study are unequivocal—women are more likely to report high levels of role overload than men. This gender difference in role overload occurred regardless of job type, dependent care status or sector of employment. This suggests that the gender difference in role overload can be partly attributed to the fact that society expects different things from women than from men. Additional support for this interpretation of the data can be found in Report One where it was noted that women are more likely than men to have primary responsibility for child care and home chores. Women also spend more time per week than men in non-work activities such as child care, elder care and home chores. In other words, the gender difference in role overload appears to be due to the fact that working women perform what Hochschild (1989) refers to as a "second shift." These gender differences in role overload will persist until societal expectations change.

Managers and professionals report higher levels of role overload than those in "other" jobs

Respondents in our sample working in managerial and professional positions report higher levels of role overload than those in "other" jobs. This job type difference in role overload was observed for both the men and the women in our sample. The higher levels of role overload can be attributed to the fact that managers and professionals spend substantially more time in work than those in "other" positions (see Report One).

Role overload is linked to time spent in dependent care

Respondents with dependent care, regardless of their gender, report higher levels of role overload than those without such responsibilities. The higher levels of role overload reported by parents and those with elder care are not surprising because these employees have a greater number of roles to perform than those without children or elderly dependents. These findings support the literature which links work–life conflict with the assumption of multiple roles.

Employees in the NFP sector report higher levels of role overload

When gender is controlled for, respondents in the NFP sector report higher levels of role overload than their counterparts in the public and private sectors. The higher levels of role overload reported by the men and the women in the NFP sector can be blamed on the very heavy work demands assumed by employees in this sector (see Report One).

Who is at risk with respect to role overload?

Who is at the highest risk with respect to role overload? The answer is quite simple—employees with heavier work and/or family demands—women, employees with dependent care (regardless of their gender), those holding managerial and professional jobs and those working in the NFP sector. Consider the following:

- 67% of women in managerial and professional positions report high role overload.
- 67% of women in the NFP sector report high levels of role overload.
- 70% of women with dependent care responsibilities report high levels of role overload.

3.2 Work to Family Interference

The conclusions one draws with respect to the prevalence of work–life conflict in Canada are very different if one uses work to family interference rather than role overload as the measure of conflict. While the distribution of role overload in our sample shows a positive skew, that of work to family interference is more normally distributed.

One in four respondents reports high levels of work to family interference

A plurality of the working Canadians in our sample (38%) report moderate levels of work to family interference (see Figure 2). While just over one in four of the respondents (28%) report high work to family interference (i.e. perceive that the demands they face at work make it very difficult to satisfy their non-work responsibilities), 35% are currently experiencing little work to family interference.

Work to family interference has remained fairly stable over time

Data comparing the percentage of the sample with high work to family interference in 1991 to the percentage with high interference in 2001 are shown in Figure 3. These data suggest that the proportion of Canadians with high work to family interference has remained fairly constant over the decade. While this is a positive finding (this form of interference has not increased), it is cause for concern as it indicates that little has been done to address this issue.

Managers and professionals report higher levels of work to family interference

Respondents working in managerial and professional positions report higher levels of work to family interference than those working in "other" positions. This job type difference in work to family interference can be seen for both male and female respondents. It is also consistent with the fact that employees in these sorts of positions are more likely than those in "other" positions to engage in work-related activities which make it harder to tend to events outside of work (e.g. work longer hours, are more likely to take work home to do in the evening, more likely to have to travel for work and spend week nights and weekend nights away from home, more likely to be personally invested in their work).

Employees with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of work to family interference

The data reviewed in this study indicate that having dependent care responsibilities increases work to family interference for both men and women. Intuitively, these results make sense as employees with children and/or elderly dependents are more likely to have inflexible commitments at home that conflict with expectations or demands at work. In other words, the more roles one has outside of work, the more likely one is to experience this form of role interference.

Employees who work in the NFP sector report higher levels of work to family interference

The data reviewed in this study indicate that Canadians who work in the NFP sector report higher levels of work to family interference. Again, this difference could be observed in both the male and female samples. These findings are consistent with the fact that employees in the NFP sector are more likely to work rigid work schedules (teachers) or shifts (nurses) which make it harder to mesh work and non-work activities.

Men and women are equally likely to experience high work to family interference

Finally, it is important to note that there are no gender differences in work to family interference when sector of employment, dependent care status and job type are taken into account. In other words, this form of work–life conflict is more a function of where one works, work and non-work demands, and work schedules than one's gender.

Who is at risk with respect to work to family interference?

Who is at the highest risk with respect to work to family interference? The data indicate that employees with heavier work and/or family demands and lower levels of control (e.g. inflexible work arrangements) such as managers and professionals, employees with dependent care responsibilities and those working in the NFP sector are at higher risk. For example:

- 34% of female managers and professionals and 32% of men in these positions;
- 36% of men and 33% of women in the NFP sector; and
- 32% of men and 30% of women with dependent care responsibilities report high levels of work to family interference.

3.3 Family to Work Interference

Only one in ten Canadians allows family demands to interfere with work

The data suggest that very few Canadians allow their family demands to interfere with the fulfilment of responsibilities at work. Only 10% of the sample report that their family demands and responsibilities interfered with their ability to meet demands at work (i.e. high levels of interference). The majority (58%) of the working Canadians in our sample, in fact, report that their family demands did not interfere with their work at all (i.e. low levels of interference). The rest of the respondents (32% of the sample) report moderate levels of interference (see Figure 2).

Family to work interference has increased over the decade

In 1991, only 5% of the working Canadians who responded to our survey reported high levels of family to work interference. By 2001, the percentage of the sample with high levels of this form of interference had doubled to 10%. In other words, a greater percentage of the working Canadians in our sample are putting family ahead of work today than a decade ago (see Figure 3). Analysis of the data suggests that much of this increase can be attributed to an increased need to supply care to elderly dependents.

Having dependent care responsibilities predisposes one to family to work interference

The data indicate that the extent to which family demands interfere with work is not associated with gender, sector of employment or job type. It is, however, strongly associated with dependent care status. Respondents with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of this form of work-life conflict than those without such responsibilities. This difference was observed in both the male and female samples. While the women report higher levels of family to work interference than the men, the difference is not enough to be considered substantive in the context of this study.

Who is at risk with respect to family to work interference?

There is only one "at risk" group for this form of work-life conflict—employees with child care and/or elder care. Even in these higher risk groups, however, the prevalence of this form of work-life conflict is low—13% of the women and 10% of the men with dependent care responsibilities report high family to work interference. These findings may be useful in dispelling the stereotype that female employees with child care or elder care give their work responsibilities a lower priority.

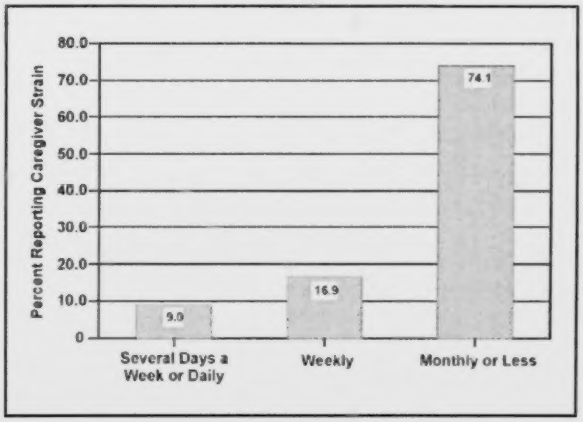
3.4 Caregiver Strain

One in four working Canadians currently reports high levels of caregiver strain

The findings with respect to the prevalence of caregiver strain are very similar to those observed for family to work interference (see Figure 4). While most of the respondents to this survey (74%) rarely experience caregiver strain, 9% find elder care to be a strain (physically, financially and mentally) several times a week or daily while 17% experience such feelings about once a week. In other words, approximately one in four working Canadians experiences what can be considered to be high levels of caregiver strain.

We cannot determine if the prevalence of caregiver strain has increased over time because this construct was not measured in 1991. The fact that both family to work interference and the proportion of Canadians with elder care responsibilities have increased over the past decade would suggest, however, that high caregiver strain has also become more common. We can also expect that this form of work-life conflict will increase dramatically over the next several decades as more employees become "at risk" (the aging of the Canadian population means that more employees will take on elder care responsibilities).

Figure 4
Prevalence of Caregiver Strain in 2001



Women report higher levels of caregiver strain than men

The data reviewed in this study are unequivocal—women are more likely to report high levels of caregiver strain than men regardless of job type, dependent care status or sector of employment. Examination of the items that make up this measure indicate that this gender difference can be largely explained by the fact that women are more likely than men to find elder care mentally "overwhelming" and physically strenuous. It will be recalled that women are also more likely than men to report high levels of role overload. When taken in context, these findings suggest that the gender differences in role overload noted previously may be partly because women are more likely to take on the responsibility for the care of elderly dependents. Additional support for this interpretation of the data can be found in Report One where it was noted that women are more likely than men to have primary responsibility for elder care and spend more time per week in elder care.

Those in "other" positions report higher levels of caregiver strain

Respondents working in "other" positions report higher levels of caregiver strain than managers and professionals. This job type difference in caregiver strain can be seen for both male and female respondents. Examination of the items that make up this measure indicate that this job type difference can be largely explained because those in "other" positions are more likely to find elder care a financial strain. This finding is consistent with the fact that employees working in managerial and professional positions earn substantially more money than those who work in "other" jobs (Report One). This finding is important in that it suggests that higher levels of income can partially offset caregiver strain by allowing employees to pay for some forms of support.

Employees with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of caregiver strain

The data reviewed in this study indicate that employees with dependent care responsibilities (both women and men) are at higher risk of caregiver strain. This is not surprising given how this construct was defined (i.e. to be considered to have dependent care, one had to spend at least an hour a week caring for a child and/or an elderly dependent).

Caregiver strain is not associated with sector of employment

The data indicate that sector of employment is not associated with caregiver strain when gender is taken into account.

Who is at risk of high caregiver strain?

Who is at risk of caregiver strain? Women are clearly more susceptible to this form of work-life conflict than men—and women with dependent care responsibilities who work in "other" positions are particularly at risk. One in three of the women in the sample with dependent care responsibilities (vs. 20% of men with dependent care), one in three of the women in the sample working in "other" jobs (vs. 22% of males in "other" jobs) and 29% of women in managerial and professional positions (vs. 17% of male managers and professionals) report higher levels of caregiver strain. The etiology behind the high caregiver strain is, however, somewhat different for the various groups at risk. For women, it appears to be the higher levels of responsibility and the greater physical strains that are problematic. For those in "other" positions, it is the fact that they have fewer financial resources to cope with the problem that appears to increase their susceptibility to this form of work-life conflict.

3.5 Work to Family Spillover

This measure of work-life conflict is somewhat different from the others examined in this analysis in that it does not assume, a priori, that work will have a negative impact on family. Rather, it allows for three quite different views of the relationship between work and family:

- They are separate (i.e. compartmentalization—work does not impact family).
- Work has a negative impact on family (i.e. negative spillover).
- Work has a positive impact on family (i.e. positive spillover).

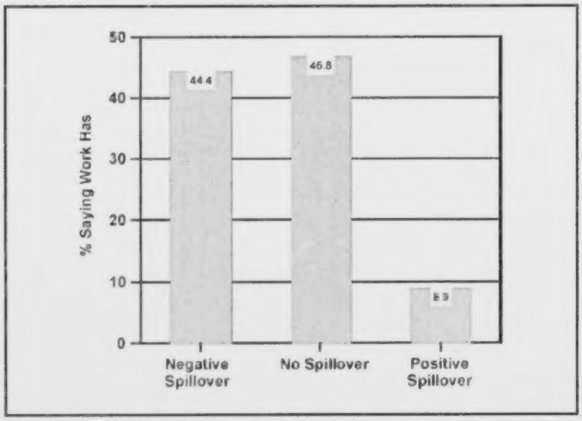
This measure also recognizes that work may have different effects on various aspects of the family role. We looked at the data collected using this scale to increase our understanding of the relationship between work and family. We did not examine how this form of work-life conflict affected organizations, families and employees. Nor were we able to do a comparison over time as this measure was not included in the 1991 survey.

This section is organized as follows. Data on the total measure (i.e. summed average of all the items in the scale) are examined first. This is followed by a brief discussion of the data on the individual items that make up the measure. The impact of gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment on the total measure of spillover is then presented. Interested readers can find details on the impact of gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment on the individual items that make up this measure in Appendix A.

Forty-four percent of employed Canadians perceive that their work has a negative impact on their family

The data (see Figure 5) indicate that the majority of Canadians who responded to this survey feel that work has had either a negative impact on their family (44% report negative work to family spillover) or no impact whatsoever (49% report no spillover).

Figure 5
Prevalence of Work to Family Spillover in 2001



Few Canadians perceive that work has had a positive impact on their family lives!

Only 9% of the Canadians in this sample report that they feel that work has had a positive impact on their family.

Work takes away from the time one has for leisure activities and children

An examination of the items that make up this measure (see Appendix B) gives us a better picture of how work spills over to family life. The majority of respondents to this survey perceive that work has had a negative impact on:

- the amount of time they have to spend in leisure activities (56% report negative spillover, 33% report no impact, 11% report positive spillover); and
- the amount of time they have to spend with their children (51% report negative spillover, 40% report no impact, 10% report positive spillover).

Work also has a negative impact on time for family and relationships at home

The sample was fairly evenly split with respect to whether or not respondents feel that work has had a negative impact or no impact at all on:

- the amount of time they spent with their partner (44% report negative spillover, 46% report no impact, 12% report positive spillover);
- the amount of time they spent in volunteer activities (43% report negative spillover, 50% report no impact, 7% report positive spillover);
- their relationship with their children (42% report negative spillover, 47% report no impact, 11% report positive spillover);
- their relationship with their partner (41% report negative spillover, 47% report no impact, 12% report positive spillover); and
- the amount of time they spent in elder care (40% report negative spillover, 51% report no impact, 8% report positive spillover).

Half of the respondents feel that work has had no impact on sharing of responsibilities at home

Finally, it can be seen that most respondents feel that work has had no impact at all on the sharing of family responsibilities in their home (38% report negative spillover, 50% report no impact, 12% report positive spillover). This is unfortunate in some ways as it suggests that at this point in time there is a disconnect between what is occurring within the workplace and what is happening in the home. Canadian women have assumed an increased responsibility for the work role as demonstrated by the fact that the majority of Canadians now live in dual-income families. It does not appear from these data that there has been a concomitant shift in who does what at home. This interpretation of the data is consistent with the higher levels of role overload reported by the women in this sample and the gender differences noted in Report One with respect to time spent in child care and home chores and responsibility for child and elder care.

Female managers and professionals are more likely than their male counterparts to experience negative spillover from work to home

Female managers and professionals report higher levels of negative work to family spillover (54%) than their male counterparts (46%). No such difference can be observed for the men and women in "other" jobs (39% of the women in "other" jobs in the sample report negative spillover vs. 39% of their male counterparts). These findings are consistent with the following facts (see Report One). Within the managerial and professional sample:

- There are no gender differences with respect to time spent in work.
- Women spend more time in child care and elder care than men and are more likely to say they have responsibilities for these roles.

There appears to be a more gendered division of labour for those in "other" jobs, with males in these positions spending more time in paid employment than their female counterparts and women spending more time in child care, elder care and home chores.

In other words, the women in managerial and professional positions in this sample devote as much time to their work role as their male counterparts but also assume more responsibilities at home. Higher levels of negative work to family spillover appear to be the consequence of this double set of responsibilities.

Managers and professionals are more likely to experience negative spillover

When gender is controlled for, managers and professionals report greater negative work to family spillover than those in "other" jobs. Those in "other" jobs are more likely to say that work does not affect family. These data indicate that it is hard to fulfill the work responsibilities associated with managerial and professional positions while meeting responsibilities at home. The time, commitment and energy required by managerial and professional jobs appear to take away from the time and energy available for family roles and relationships outside of work. In other words, these jobs are "greedy" with respect to both time and energy.

Employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to experience negative spillover

When gender is controlled for, respondents with dependent care responsibilities report greater negative work to family spillover. Respondents who do not spend time in dependent care are more likely to say that work does not affect family. This finding makes intuitive sense—the lower the number of responsibilities outside of work, the lower the probability that the culture of "work ahead of family" will come into play.

Employees in the NFP sector are more likely to experience negative spillover

When gender is controlled for, respondents who work in the NFP sector are more likely than their counterparts in the public and private sector samples to report negative work to family spillover. Respondents in the public and private sector samples are more likely to say that work does not affect family. The higher levels of negative spillover in the NFP sector can be explained by the greater reliance on shift schedules in this sector (e.g. nurses and doctors) and the higher use of fixed work schedules (e.g. teachers) (see Report One). Such work arrangements disrupt "family rhythms" and make it more difficult for employees to be with their families.

Positive spillover is not associated with gender, job type, dependent care status or sector of employment

Approximately 10% of the respondents to this survey report that their work had a positive impact on their family situation. The tendency to report positive spillover was not associated with gender, job type, dependent care status or sector of employment.

Who is at risk of negative work to family spillover?

The data indicate that women, managers and professionals, and employees with dependent care responsibilities (especially those who work in the NFP sector) are more likely to experience this form of work-life conflict. Consider the following:

- 54% of the female managers and professionals in the sample report negative spillover versus 39% of the females in "other" jobs.

- 46% of the male managers and professionals in the sample report negative spillover versus 38% of the men in "other" jobs.
- 50% of the women in the sample with dependent care responsibilities report negative spillover versus 40% of their female counterparts without dependent care responsibilities.
- 48% of the men in the sample with dependent care responsibilities report negative spillover versus 38% of the men in the sample who had no dependent care responsibilities.
- 53% of the women in the NFP sample report negative spillover versus 42% of their female counterparts in the public and private sectors.
- 49% of the men in the NFP sample report negative spillover versus 43% of their male counterparts in the private sector and 40% of the men in the public sector.

What can we say about the causes of negative spillover from these data? It would appear that higher demands (in either work or family domains) and/or lower levels of control (e.g. less flexible work arrangements, lower incomes) are both associated with negative spillover. Employees with both higher demands and lower control (i.e. women with children in the NFP sector, female managers and professionals with dependent care responsibilities) are the most likely to experience this form of work-life conflict.

3.6 Summary

What do we know about role overload from these data?

The following key observations can be drawn regarding role overload from the data reviewed in this report:

1. *High levels of role overload have become systemic within the population of employees working for Canada's larger employers.*

   The majority of employees in this group (58%) are currently experiencing high levels of role overload. Another 30% report moderate levels of role overload. Only 12% of the respondents in this sample report low levels of overload.

2. *The percentage of the workforce with high role overload has increased over the past decade.*

   Fifty-eight percent of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of role overload—an increase of 11% compared to what was observed in the 1991 sample. This increase in role overload is consistent with the fact that employees in the 2001 sample spent more time in work-related activities per week and more time in work and family activities than their counterparts in the 1991 sample. Other data from the 2001 survey suggest that much of this increase in role overload can be linked to new information and communications technology (e.g. laptops, email, cell phones), organizational norms that still reward long hours at the office rather than performance and organizational anorexia (downsizing has meant there are too few employees to do the work).

3. *Employees with more family demands (i.e. dependent care responsibilities) are more likely to experience high levels of role overload.*

   When gender is taken into account, those with dependent care responsibilities report role overload levels that are approximately 15 percentage points higher than those without dependent care. The higher levels of role overload reported by parents and those with elder care are not surprising as these employees have a greater number of roles to perform and devote more hours per week to work and family activities than their counterparts without such responsibilities.

4. *Women are more likely than men to report high levels of role overload.*

   Women report higher levels of role overload than men even when sector of employment, dependent care status and job type are controlled for. The gender difference in role overload is approximately 13 percentage points (i.e. women report levels of role overload that are approximately 13% higher than those reported by men regardless of their job, their dependent care status or the sector in which they work). The gender difference in role overload appears to be because working women are more likely than their male counterparts to perform what Hochschild (1989) refers to as a "second shift" (i.e. more onerous family demands).

5. *Employees with more work demands (i.e. managers and professionals and employees working in the NFP sector) are also likely to experience high levels of role overload.*

   When gender is taken into account, employees working in the NFP sector report role overload levels that are approximately 5% higher than those reported by their counterparts in the public and private sectors. Similarly, managers and professionals report role overload levels that are approximately 7% higher than those reported by employees in "other" jobs. Not coincidently, managers, professionals and NFP sector employees were found in Report One to devote substantially more hours per week to work-related activities.

What do we know about work to family interference from these data?

The data reviewed in this report support the following deductions with respect to work to family interference:

1. *Work to family interference remains a real problem for one in four Canadians working for larger employees.*

   One in four Canadians reports that work responsibilities interfere with the ability to fulfill his or her responsibilities at home. Almost 40% of Canadians report moderate levels of interference. The percentage of the Canadian workforce with high levels of work to family interference has not changed over the past decade.

2. *Interference from work to family is primarily a function of work demands (i.e. job type, sector of employment) than the demands one faces outside of work.*

   Canadians with higher demands at work (i.e. those in managerial and professional positions, those who work in the NFP sector) and at home (i.e. those with dependent care responsibilities) are more susceptible to this form of work-life conflict. When gender is taken into account:

   - Respondents in the NFP sector report work to family interference levels that are approximately 10 percentage points higher than those reported by their counterparts in the public and private sectors.
   - Managers and professionals report work to family interference levels that are approximately 12 percentage points higher than those reported by those in "other" jobs.

3. *The greater the number of responsibilities outside of work, the more likely an employee is to experience high work to family interference.*

   Canadians with more non-work responsibilities have higher work to family interference. The impact of non-work demands on this form of work-life conflict is not, however, as great as was observed with respect to work demands. For example, respondents with dependent care responsibilities report work to family interference levels that are, on average, 6% higher than those without dependent care.

What do we know about family to work interference from these data?

The following key observations can be drawn regarding family to work interference from the data reviewed in this report:

1. *Family to work interference is not prevalent in Canada at this time.*

   In fact, if one used this measure of work-life conflict as one's indicator of problems, then it could be concluded that work-family conflict is not a problem in Canada at this time. Only 10% of the Canadians in this sample report high levels of family to work interference. Approximately one-third report moderate levels of family to work interference.

2. *Very few Canadians allow their family demands to interfere with the fulfillment of responsibilities at work.*

   Family to work interference has a very different distribution than observed with role overload and work to family interference. While role overload is positively skewed and work to family interference has a normal distribution, family to work interference is negatively skewed. Three times as many Canadians give priority to work at the expense of their family as the reverse (i.e. give priority to their family).

3. *The percentage of working Canadians who give priority to family rather than work has doubled over the past decade.*

   This increase (a 5 percentage point increase over the decade) can be largely attributed to the fact that the number of employees with elder care responsibilities has increased over the past decade.

4. *Family to work interference is solely a function of the demands an employee faces within the family domain (operationalized in this study as dependent care status).*

   Employees with more demands outside of work are more likely to report that their family responsibilities interfere with their ability to meet obligations at work. Men and women are equally likely to report that their family demands interfere with their work.

5. *Family to work interference is not associated with work demands (i.e. no job type or sector of employment differences in interference).*

What do we know about caregiver strain from these data?

The data reviewed in this report with respect to caregiver strain support the following assertions:

1. *Approximately one in four working Canadians experiences what can be considered to be high levels of caregiver strain.*

   The findings with respect to the prevalence of caregiver strain are very similar to those observed with respect to family to work interference. While most of the respondents to this survey (74%) rarely experience caregiver strain, 9% find elder care to be a strain (physically, financially and mentally) several times a week or daily while 17% experience such feelings approximately once a week.

2. *Women report higher levels of caregiver strain than men.*

   The data reviewed in this study are unequivocal—women are more likely to report high levels of caregiver strain than men regardless of job type, dependent care status or sector of employment. This gender difference can be largely explained by the fact that women are more likely than men to find elder care mentally "overwhelming" and a physical strain. These findings are not surprising given the higher levels of role overload reported by the women in the sample and data showing that the women in the sample are more likely than the men (regardless of their job type or sector of employment) to have primary responsibility for elder care and spend more time per week in elder care.

3. *Employees working in clerical, administrative and blue collar positions report higher levels of caregiver strain.*

   Respondents working in "other" positions report higher levels of caregiver strain than managers and professionals. This job type difference in caregiver strain is observed for both male and female respondents and can be largely explained by the income differentials between the two groups (i.e. those in "other" positions were more likely than their counterparts in managerial and professional jobs to find elder care a financial strain). This finding is important as it suggests that higher levels of income can partially offset caregiver strain by allowing employees to purchase some forms of support.

4. *Employees with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of caregiver strain.*

   The data reviewed in this study indicate employees with dependent care responsibilities (both women and men) are at higher risk of caregiver strain. This is not surprising given how this construct was defined (i.e. to be considered to have dependent care, one had to spend at least an hour a week caring for a child and/or an elderly dependent).

What do we know about work to family spillover from these data?

The following observations arise from the data on work to family spillover reviewed in this study:

1. *Almost half of the Canadians working at larger firms (44% of this sample) experience negative work to family spillover.*

2. *Employees with heavier demands (i.e. women, managers and professionals, employees with child care and/or elder care, and employees in the NFP sector) are more likely to report that work has a negative impact on the amount of time they have to spend on their family roles and relationships at home (i.e. report negative spillover).*

It should be noted that it does not matter where these demands arise—the work domain or the family domain. Heavier demands in either domain seem to predispose an employee to negative spillover.

3. *Almost half of the Canadians working at larger firms (47% of this sample) feel that work and family are quite separate domains and that work does not affect their family life.*

4. *Employees with fewer demands either at work (i.e. those in "other" jobs) and/or at home (those without dependent care responsibilities and men) are more likely to report that work and family are separate domains.*

5. *Very few Canadians working at larger firms (only 9% of this sample) perceive that their experiences at work have a positive impact on their family life.*

Table 1
Summary of Between Group Differences in Work–Life Conflict

Construct	% High	Impact on Work-Life Conflict			
		Gender	Job Type	DC	Sector
Role Overload	58%	W > M	Mgr./Prof. > "other"	DC > No DC	NFP > PS and Priv.
Work to Family Interference	28%	No gender differences	Mgr./Prof. > "other"	DC > No DC	NFP > PS and Priv.
Family to Work Interference	9%	No gender differences	No job type difference	DC > No DC	No sector differences
Caregiver Strain	26%	W > M	"other" > Mgr./Prof.	DC > No DC	No sector differences
Negative Work to Family Spillover	44%	For Mgr./Prof., W. > M.	Mgr./Prof. > "other"	DC > No DC	NFP > PS and Priv.

Key to Table: *W = Women; M = Men; DC = Dependent Care; Mgr. = Manager; Prof. = Professional; NFP = Not-for-Profit; PS = Public Sector; Priv. = Private Sector*

So ... what does the elephant look like?

The key findings from this chapter are summarized in Table 1. The correlation between the various measures of work–life conflict are shown in Table 2. Examination of the data in Table 1 reveal that the conclusions one reaches with respect to the prevalence of work–life conflict in Canada depend on what measure of work–life conflict is used and the characteristics of the group being studied. Looking at the data optimistically (i.e. taking prevalence of work to family interference and caregiver strain as our measures of work–life conflict), we estimate that one in four Canadians working at larger organizations experiences high levels of conflict between work and family. This is the best case scenario. The worst case scenario (i.e. estimates calculated using role overload data) is that almost 60% of Canadians who are employed outside the home cannot balance their work and family demands.

Who has more problems balancing work and family responsibilities? The evidence is quite clear—employed Canadians with dependent care responsibilities have the most difficulty balancing work and family demands. Employees with dependent care responsibilities report greater levels of work–life conflict than those without such responsibilities regardless of how work–life conflict was assessed. None of the other factors examined in this study was associated with high levels of all five work–life conflict measures. Employees with fewer demands outside of work are more able to separate work and family. This greater ability to balance can be attributed to the fact that this group has fewer demands on their time and more degrees of freedom to deal with work issues (i.e. more control over their time).

Job type was associated with all but one of the measures of work–life conflict. Employees with higher demands at work (i.e. managers and professionals) were more likely than those in "other" jobs to experience high levels of overload, work to family interference and negative spillover (female managers in particular report higher levels of negative spillover). The data indicate that those in "other" jobs, however, were more likely to report higher levels of caregiver strain due to the financial stresses associated with elder care.

Table 2
Correlation Between the Different Measures of Work–Life Conflict

	Role Overload	Work to Family Interference	Family to Work Interference	Caregiver Strain
Role Overload	1.000	.601	.300	.227
Work to Family Interference		1.000	.336	.170
Family to Work Interference			1.000	.231
Caregiver Strain				1.000

Gender was associated with two out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Women were more likely than men to report high levels of role overload and high caregiver strain. As noted in Report One, women devote more hours per week than men to non-work activities such as child care and elder care and are more likely to have primary responsibility for non-work tasks.

It is interesting to note that when job type is taken into account and when work–life conflict is broken into its component parts, many of the gender differences in work–life conflict referred to in the research literature disappear. This suggests that many of the gender differences in work–life conflict may be attributed to the fact that women are typically compressed into a different set of jobs than men.

Sector of employment was associated with three out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Respondents working in the NFP sector were more likely than their counterparts in the public and private sectors to report high role overload, high work to family interference and negative spillover. The elevated levels of work–life conflict in this sector can be attributed to higher work demands (respondents in this sector spend more hours per week in employment-related activities and are more likely to have to spend week nights and weekend nights away from home on job-related travel) and how work is arranged (shift arrangements, rigid work schedules). It should be noted that the women in the NFP sector sample had the most difficulties balancing work and family. The data indicate that the women in this sector have three challenges to meet—heavier demands at home, heavier demands at work, and work arrangements that give them little ability to combine work and non-work demands.

The following key themes can be seen in the above data:

1. Work–life conflict is positively associated with role demands. It does not matter if the demands stem from the work or non-work domains—the more demands placed on an employee, the more difficulties they will experience with respect to balance.
2. More Canadians meet work demands at the expense of their family than the reverse (i.e. only 10% report high family to work interference).
3. Work–life conflict in Canada is most likely to be manifested in two ways: role overload and negative work to family spillover.

Chapter 4

Why Should Organizations Care About Work–Life Conflict? Effects on the Organization

From the data reviewed in the previous section, we can conclude that a substantial proportion of Canadians who work for the country's larger employees are overloaded (58% with high role overload) and meet their work demands at the expense of time for their family and relationships outside of work (44% report negative work to family spillover, 28% report high levels of work to family interference). We also know that approximately one in four of these employees suffers from high levels of caregiver strain one or more times per week and one in ten meets family demands at the expense of work. Finally, the data also indicate that a higher percentage of employed Canadians are having difficulties balancing work and family demands than a decade ago. The question that remains to be answered is—so what? This chapter seeks to answer this question from the perspective of the employer. Chapter Five looks at this issue from the angle of the family while Chapter Six focuses on the view of the employee.

Previous research in the area supports a link between work–life conflict and the "bottom line." Signs of problems at the organizational level range from increased absence and turnover due to physical and mental illness and the inability to manage work-related stress to reduced job satisfaction and commitment (Duxbury et al., 1991; Higgins et al., 1992). Some of these consequences are quantifiable in dollars and cents (e.g. time lost due to illness, turnover, absenteeism); others are somewhat less tangible and reflect a deterioration in employee attitudes toward their work and the employing organization (e.g. reduced job satisfaction and employee commitment).[12]

The following questions are addressed in this chapter:

- How committed are Canadian employees to their organization? How has this commitment changed over time? What is the link between organizational commitment and work–life conflict?
- How satisfied are Canadian employees with their jobs? How has this satisfaction changed over time? What is the link between job satisfaction and work–life conflict?
- How prevalent is high job stress? How has job stress changed over the past decade? What is the link between job stress and work–life conflict?
- How often are Canadian employees thinking of leaving their current jobs? Why are they thinking of leaving? What is the link between intent to turnover and work–life conflict?
- How do Canadian employees rate their organization as a place to work? What is the link between how one views one's employer and work–life conflict?
- How often are Canadians who are employed in Canada's larger organizations absent from work: in total, due to ill health, due to child care, due to elder care? What is the link between absenteeism and work–life conflict? What is the incremental cost to the organization of absenteeism due to high work–life conflict?
- What is the impact of gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment on the various organizational outcomes examined in this study?

The data discussed in this section of the report can be found in Appendix C.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 4.1 provides a summary of how Canada's larger employers are doing with respect to each of the key outcomes noted above. Changes over time in each of these variables are provided where possible (not all measures were collected in both 1991 and 2001). Section 4.2 looks at the impacts of high work–life conflict on each of these key attitudes and outcomes. Key findings as well as relevant conclusions are summarized in section 4.3.

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[12] See Quick et al., 1997 and Tangri, 2003 for a review of this literature.

4.1 Report Card on Canadian Organizations

Section 4.1 is divided into six subsections. Data on organizational commitment are presented first. This is followed by components devoted to job satisfaction, job stress, intent to turnover, rating of the organization as a place to work, and absenteeism.

4.1.1 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment measures an employee's loyalty to the organization. An individual who has high organizational commitment is willing to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization, and has a strong desire to remain with the organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). Work-life conflict has been shown to be associated with lower organizational commitment.[13] Individuals who rate their employers as being unsupportive of their non-work roles are less likely to feel a sense of loyalty to the perceived source of the conflict. Commitment is particularly critical to organizations as it is linked to productivity (those with high commitment tend to work longer hours, work more paid and unpaid overtime) and retention (employees who are more committed to their employer are less likely to leave the organization). From the organization's perspective, the greater the proportion of the sample reporting high organizational commitment, the better.

What do the data collected in conjunction with this study tell us about organizational commitment?

Half of the Canadians employed in larger organizations are committed to their employer

Just over half of the respondents to this survey (53%) are committed to the organization where they work. One in ten, however, has very low levels of commitment (see Figure 6).

Organizational commitment has declined over time

The data suggest that far fewer employed Canadians are highly committed to their employer today than a decade ago (see Figure 7). Furthermore, the decline appears to have been quite precipitous—13 percentage points over the decade. This decline in commitment is not surprising given the amount of downsizing and restructuring that occurred throughout the 1990s. While the declines in commitment can be seen "across the board," they are the steepest in the public and NFP sectors and in "other" jobs.

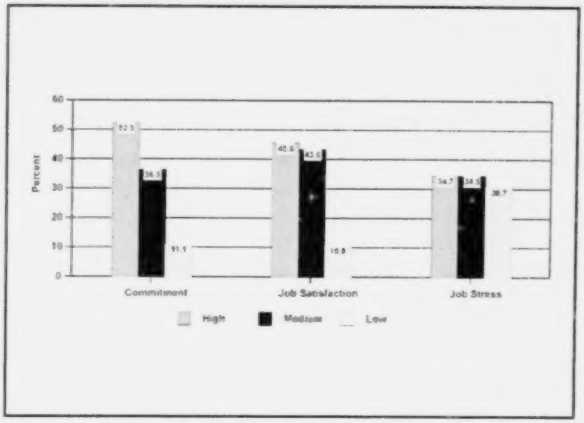
Organizational commitment is a function of where one works and what one does at work rather than gender or dependent care status

The data indicate that organizational commitment is a function of where one works (i.e. sector of employment) and what one does at work (i.e. job type) rather than gender or dependent care status. Who has lower commitment? Examination of the data in Appendix C points to the following groups:

- men in technical, clerical, administrative and production positions: only 46% of the men in "other" positions in the sample report high levels of commitment;
- male public servants: 45% of male public servants report high commitment; and
- women in the public and NFP (i.e. nurses, teachers) sectors: 52% of respondents in these groups report high commitment.

Who has higher levels of commitment? Private sector employees (both male and female) and males working in the NFP sector report higher levels of organizational commitment (58% of the respondents in these three groups report high commitment).

Figure 6
Organizational Attitudes and Outcomes in 2001



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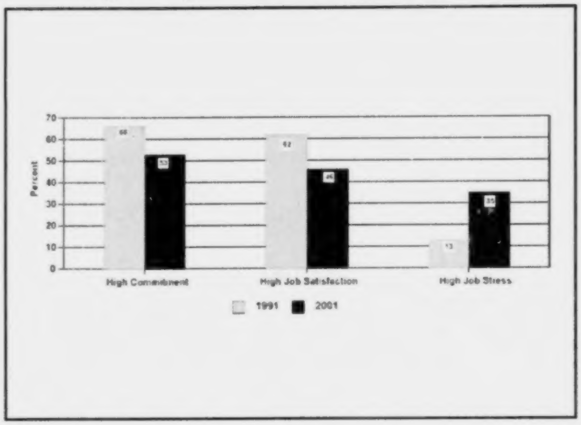
[13] For a review of this literature, see Googins, 1991; O'Neil and Greenberger, 1994; and Duxbury & Higgins, 1998.

Figure 7
Change in Organizational Outcomes Over Time



4.1.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the degree to which an individual feels positively or negatively about various aspects of his or her job. It represents the personal meaning or perceived quality of one's job and associated work experiences. Of particular relevance to this research is the negative association between work-life conflict and job satisfaction. A number of authors feel that this occurs because the inconveniences and irritations caused by work to family interference (e.g. not being able to segregate or integrate the work and family systems) and role overload (e.g. excessive work and family demands) produce conflicts which spill over into the work domain. Such conflicts make a person too tired, too preoccupied or too stressed to enjoy his or her job.

Although work can be a source of satisfaction and self-esteem, it can also foster dissatisfaction, depressed feelings and despair. Research[14] has shown a negative relationship between job satisfaction and work stress, family conflict, role overload, absenteeism, and intent to quit. A positive relationship has been found between job satisfaction and marital satisfaction, life satisfaction, organizational commitment, morale, and mental and physical health. A negative relationship between work-life conflict and job satisfaction has also been reported in the literature.

Emotional feelings generated at work have also been found to spill over into family life. In almost all cases, spillover involves negative emotional feelings (e.g. worries, tensions and concerns). To have a healthy home life, one must therefore manage negative emotions that arise at work. Job satisfaction has been found to be a critical variable with respect to positive work to family spillover. Individuals who are more satisfied with their jobs have been found to be more emotionally and interpersonally available to their family members.

What do the data collected in conjunction with this study tell us about the job satisfaction of Canadian employees?

Less than half of the Canadians who work for larger companies are highly satisfied with their jobs

Under half of the employed Canadians in this sample (46%) were highly satisfied with their jobs. A similar proportion (44%) were moderately satisfied with their jobs (see Figure 6).

What do Canadian employees like about their jobs? What do they dislike? Data addressing these questions, while not critical to this report, are provided for the interested reader in Box 9.

Box 9

Job Satisfaction

	% Satisfied	% Dissatisfied
Sorts of things they do	67%	12%
Job in general	66%	13%
Schedule of working hours	66%	15%
Amount of job security	56%	19%
Amount of pay	47%	33%
Workload	42%	33%
Training and development opportunities	39%	35%
Ability to meet career goals	38%	35%

Canadians are generally satisfied with what they do at work but more dissatisfied with their workloads and the amount of career development they receive

The data suggest that the majority of Canadian employees are satisfied with what they are asked to do at work, the schedule of their work hours and their job security. However, one in three of the Canadians who participated in this survey is dissatisfied with their workloads as well as the career development opportunities at their place of work—almost the same proportion who are satisfied. While almost half the sample (47%) say they are satisfied with the amount of pay they receive, one in three says they are dissatisfied.

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[14] For a review of this literature, see Karasek, Gardell, & Lindell, 1987; Bedeian et al., 1988; Googins, 1991; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Duxbury & Higgins, 1998.

Job satisfaction strongly associated with job type and sector of employment

The data (not shown) indicate that when job type and sector are taken into account, neither gender nor dependent care status is linked to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is, however, strongly associated with both job type and sector of employment.

- ▲ Managers and professionals in the public sector are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs in general, the sorts of things they do and their pay but less likely to be satisfied with their workloads and their training and development opportunities.
- ▲ Those in "other" jobs in the public sector are more likely to be satisfied with their workloads and less likely to be satisfied with their pay, the sorts of things they do at work and their ability to meet their career goals.
- ▲ Respondents in the NFP sector are more likely than those in the private sector sample to be dissatisfied with their workloads (consistent with the role overload and time in work data).
- ▲ Respondents in both the public and NFP sector samples are more likely than those in the private sector to be dissatisfied with the amount of training and development offered in their organizations and their ability to meet their career goals.

Job satisfaction has declined in Canada in the last decade

The data suggest that job satisfaction has declined in Canada in the past decade. In 1991, 62% of the respondents to our study reported high job satisfaction. This had declined to 46% with high job satisfaction in 2001—a drop of 16 percentage points (see Figure 7). Examination of the data suggests that this decline in job satisfaction can largely be attributed to an increased dissatisfaction with workloads and career development opportunities.

Job satisfaction linked to job type and sector of employment rather than gender or dependent care status

The data on job satisfaction are virtually identical to those observed for organizational commitment. Job satisfaction is linked to what you do (i.e. job type) and where you do it (i.e. sector of employment, organization) rather than gender or dependent care status. Who is more likely to be satisfied with their jobs?

- employees who work in managerial and professional positions (48% with high job satisfaction);
- men and women who work in the private sector (47% with high job satisfaction);
- men in the NFP sector (47% with high job satisfaction); and
- women in the public sector (49% with high job satisfaction).

Who are less likely to be satisfied with their jobs?

- men who work in "other" positions (40% with high job satisfaction) and in the public sector (43% with high job satisfaction); and
- women who work in the NFP sector (i.e. nurses and teachers) (42% with high job satisfaction).

4.1.3 Job Stress

Job stress is viewed in terms of the incompatibility of work demands. This may be in the form of conflict between organizational demands and one's own values, problems of personal resource allocation, conflict between obligations to other people and conflict between excessively numerous or difficult tasks (role overload). Job stress can also be generated by harassment or a "chilly" work climate.

Employees can bring stress into the workplace or they can find it there. Working conditions associated with job stress include heavy workloads, role ambiguity, under-utilization of abilities, lack of participation in decision making, health and safety hazards, job insecurity, tight deadlines and responsibility for the safety and well-being of others. High work stress is linked to poor physical and mental health, high family stress, marital conflict, poor performance of work and family roles, low work morale, low organizational commitment and low job satisfaction (Duxbury et al., 1992; Higgins et al., 1993).

What do we know from this research about job stress levels in Canada's larger employers?

One in three Canadians working in larger organizations reports high levels of job stress

The data collected for this study indicate that employees experience very different levels of job stress with approximately equal numbers reporting high (35%), moderate (35%) and low (31%) levels of job stress (see Figure 6).

Job stress has increased dramatically over the decade

In 1991, just over one in ten of the Canadians who answered our survey reported high levels of job stress. This increased to just over one in three by 2001. In other words, the percentage of Canadians with high stress increased by 22 percentage points over the decade (see Figure 7). The data indicate that this increase in job stress is largely due to the requirement to do more with less (due to downsizing and restructuring), office technology and job insecurity.

High job stress is linked to responsibilities at work and home

Job stress does not appear to be associated with gender. It is linked to responsibilities at work (i.e. job type and sector of employment) and outside of work (i.e. dependent care status). Who reports higher job stress?

- managers and professionals: 39% of the men and 40% of the women in managerial and professional positions report high job stress;
- those working in the NFP sector (i.e. nurses, doctors, teachers): 39% of the men and 38% of the women working in the NFP sector report high job stress;
- public sector employees: 35% of the men and 34% of the women in the public sector sample report high job stress; and
- employees with dependent care: 37% of the men and 36% of the women with dependent care responsibilities report high job stress.

There does not appear to be one unique set of job stressors within Canadian firms. The results indicate that the causes of high job stress vary substantially by group. It would appear that the downsizing and restructuring initiatives of the 1990s have had a particularly deleterious effect on the managers (and to a lesser extent the professionals) within Canadian organizations. This group of employees has very heavy work demands, spends a lot of time in job-related travel and works a lot of unpaid overtime. These factors are all highly correlated with increased levels of job stress. The higher levels of job stress in the NFP sector (i.e. nurses, doctors, teachers) are also likely due to the impact of downsizing and the high number of policy changes affecting this sector over the decade. Job stress within the public sector may be linked to the pressures of dealing with the public and having competing demands (e.g. from the public, the press, the politicians and the person they report to). Resourcing in this sector has also declined over the past decade and downsizing has occurred. Finally, the fact that employees with dependent care report higher levels of job stress suggests that responsibilities at home (i.e. having to look after children and/or elder care) increases conflict at work. While the exact mechanism through which this occurs is unknown, comments provided at the end of the survey suggest the following two stressors:

- worry about not progressing in one's career due to family demands and responsibilities; and
- backlash from one's colleagues who feel that "parents get all the breaks" and that they are "picking up the slack."

4.1.4 Intent to Turnover

Intent to turnover is defined as an individual's desire to leave an organization. From the employee's point of view, there are three major reasons to leave a job: (1) a better offer elsewhere, (2) a way of coping with undesirable job conditions (e.g. withdrawal) or (3) a poor fit between work and family. No matter what the cause, turnover has a number of undesirable implications for organizations, including the costs of losing an experienced worker, recruiting and retraining a successor (retraining is estimated to cost 1.5 times the employee's annual salary), the lower productivity of a new worker, and secondary morale effects on managers, peers and subordinates (Vanderkolk and Young, 1991).

Another set of problems may occur when employees with high intent to turnover do not leave the organization. Such employees tend to have lower commitment, be more dissatisfied with their jobs and reduce morale in the area in which they work. Many such employees "retire on the job" (i.e. do not do their share of the work) which causes workload problems for others in their area.

This study examined both intent to turnover and motivations to leave. Intent to turnover was measured by asking respondents to indicate how often in the last six months they had thought about leaving their current organization to work elsewhere. Reasons for leaving were conceptualized to fall into two groupings: "pushes" (employee leaves to escape something within the current work environment) and "pulls" (employee leaves because he or she is attracted to something outside of the current work environment). Reasons within each of these groupings include the following:

- pushes: a lack of recognition for what they do, a non-supportive and frustrating work environment, unrealistic work expectations, personality conflicts with co-workers or manager, and a disconnect between their values and the organization's values; and

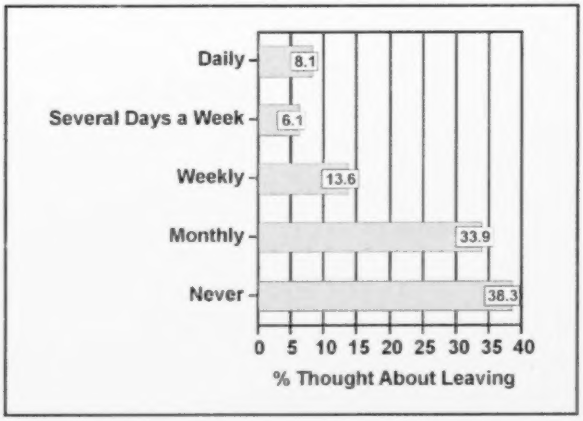
- pulls: a higher salary, more interesting or challenging work, greater opportunities for career advancement, more time for personal or family activities, to move closer to family members.

What do we know about intent to turnover from this study?

One in four employed Canadians is seriously thinking about leaving their current organization

Data on intent to turnover are shown in Figure 8. These data reveal that a substantial number of Canadians employed with large firms are seriously thinking about leaving their current organization. While 38% of respondents say they never think about leaving their current organization and 34% have little intent to leave (i.e. think of leaving about once a month), 8% think of leaving daily, 6% think about leaving several times a week, and 14% think of leaving approximately once a week. In other words, just over one in four of the Canadians in this sample (i.e. 28%) can be considered to have high intent to turnover (i.e. think of leaving weekly or more).

Figure 8
Intent to Turnover in 2001



Why are Canadians thinking of leaving their current organization?

Reasons for leaving their organization are presented in descending order (i.e. from most to least common) in Box 10. When the data are organized in this way, they show that relatively few people are thinking of leaving to move closer to family members, because they do not get along with their managers or their co-workers, or because their values are not the same as their organization's. Rather, the main pushes are a lack of recognition (half do not feel their efforts are recognized), the perception that their work environment is frustrating and non-supportive (just over half are frustrated by the work environment and approximately one third perceive the work environment is not supportive of them) and unrealistic workloads (just over one in four says workloads are unrealistic and about one-third say that they would leave to get more time for themselves and their family).

With respect to attractions outside of their current organization, the data are very consistent with those observed with respect to job satisfaction: employees would leave for greater career development opportunities (i.e. 38% would leave for more interesting work and 36% would leave for career advancement opportunities elsewhere) and higher pay (51% would leave for a higher paying job). It should be noted that salary is often looked at as another form of recognition.

In other words, Canadian employees are thinking of leaving their current organization:

- because they feel they are not recognized for what they do (salary as well as positive feedback);
- for career development purposes;
- because they perceive that their work environment is frustrating and non-supportive; and
- for work–life purposes (to have more time for personal and family matters, and because work expectations are unrealistic).

Box 10

Reasons Given for Leaving the Organization

Reason	Percent
Frustrated by work environment	53.2%
To earn a higher salary	50.6%
Sense lack of recognition	50.5%
To engage in more interesting work	37.6%
Opportunities for advancement elsewhere	35.6%
More time for personal/family activities	31.4%
Work environment not supportive	31.1%
Work expectations unrealistic	26.3%
My values and organization's not the same	19.3%
Personality conflicts with workers or manager	18.8%
To move closer to family members	13.8%

According to the data presented in Appendix C, reasons for leaving an organization are associated with gender, job type, sector and dependent care status as follows:

- Women are more likely to leave for work–life balance reasons while men are more likely to leave for career development reasons (i.e. opportunities for advancement elsewhere).
- Those in "other" positions are more likely to leave for a higher salary or more interesting work while managers and professionals are more likely to leave for work and family reasons and for opportunities for advancement.
- Those without dependent care responsibilities are more likely to be thinking of leaving for work and lifestyle reasons.
- Work environments (e.g. lack of rewards and recognition, non-supportive work environments, frustrating work environments) are problematic for all employees regardless of gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care.
- Respondents working in the NFP sector and public sector more likely to say they would leave because they felt the work environment was not supportive and/or frustrating and because they wanted more time for personal/family activities.
- Male respondents in the public sector sample are more likely to leave because their values are not the same as those of the organization.
- Respondents working in the private sector sample are more likely to leave for more interesting work and for higher salaries.
- Women in "other" positions and women with dependent care responsibilities are more likely than any other group to be thinking of leaving because of personality conflicts with managers or colleagues.

Who is more likely to be thinking of leaving?

Intent to turnover is not associated with job type or dependent care status. It is, however, strongly associated with sector of employment and gender. Men, regardless of sector of employment or dependent care status, are more likely than women to be thinking of leaving their organization. Both male and female respondents in the private sector sample report the lowest intent to turnover (26% of the men and 23% of the women in the private sector sample are thinking of leaving weekly or more) while the men in the public sector sample report the highest levels (33% of the men in the public sector sample are thinking of leaving weekly or more).

Reasons for leaving are strongly associated with gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment. The interested reader can find a discussion of these differences in Box 10.

4.1.5 Rating of Organization as a Place to Work

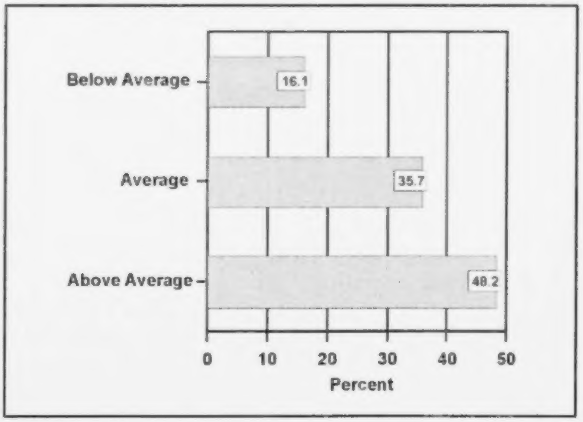
Single-item survey measures are often used to ask people how they feel about a particular issue—all things considered. In this survey, we asked individuals to indicate "Overall, how would you rate your organization as a place to work?" We gave them the following choices from which to pick: One of the best, above average, average, below average, one of the worst. This item was found to be highly associated with intent to turnover and organizational commitment, and can be used as an indicator of how easy or difficult it will be to recruit and retain in a particular area or with a particular group.

So, how do Canadian employees rate their employer?

Less than half of the sample rated their organization as an above average place to work

Just under half of the Canadians who responded to this study (48%) feel that their organization was an above average place to work. Not coincidentally, these individuals also tend to be committed to their organization and are satisfied with their jobs. Just over one in three (36%) of the respondents describe their organization as an average place to work, while 16% feel that their organization is a below average place to work. These results, which are shown in Figure 9, are not a ringing endorsement of employment practices in Canada's larger organizations. Furthermore, these data suggest that many of the country's larger employers will have to be worried

Figure 9
Rating of Organization as a Place to Work in 2001



about recruitment and retention issues in the near future as the job market heats up (see Report One).

Since this measure was not used in the 1991 study, we cannot examine how employees' perceptions of their employer have changed over time. As noted previously, this measure is highly correlated to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, both of which declined over the decade. This would lead us to suspect that Canadians' view of their employer has also declined over the decade.

Who is more likely to rate their employer positively?

Results obtained with respect to "rating of the organization as a place to work" are very similar to observations about organizational commitment—one's view of their employer depends on what they do and where they do it (i.e. job type and sector of employment) rather than gender and dependent care responsibilities. In other words, how one rates the organization has more to do with how one is treated while at work rather than what one has to do outside of the work environment. The following differences with respect to "view of the organization as a place to work" are worthy of note:

- Male managers and professionals (especially those working in the private sector) are more likely to have a positive view of their employer (52% rate their organization an above average) than either their female counterparts (47% of female managers and professionals rate their organization as above average) or men and women in "other" positions within the organization (46% of men and 47% of women in "other" positions give their organization an above-average rating).
- Men without dependent care responsibilities have the most positive view of their organization (51% perceive it is above average). Women with dependent care responsibilities are less likely to have a positive view of their employer (46% perceive it is above average).
- Men in the private and NFP sectors have a more positive view of their employer than their female counterparts (55% of the men in the private sector sample and 50% of the men in the NFP sector sample rate their organization as an above average place to work).
- Women in the NFP sector (i.e. nurses, teachers) are less likely than any other group to think that their employer is above average (43%).

In other words, men in managerial and professional positions (especially those working in the private sector and those without dependent care responsibilities) are more likely to rate their organization positively. Women with dependent care responsibilities (especially managers and professionals working in the NFP and public sectors) are the least likely to feel that their organization is best practice. These data suggest that recruitment and retention may be an issue within the NFP and public sectors.

4.1.6 Absenteeism

Many organizations use absences from work as a measure of productivity (if workers are not on the job, the work is definitely not being done). While companies expect a certain amount of absenteeism and recognize that some absenteeism is even beneficial to the employee, too much absenteeism can be costly in terms of productivity and is often symptomatic of problems within the workplace. Days absent from work have, for example, been found to be positively associated with an inability to balance work and family demands and stress, and negatively associated with loyalty, job satisfaction and morale (Galinsky et al., 1991).

Absenteeism for personal or family reasons has doubled in the past 10 years. Canadian labour force statistics released by Statistics Canada in March 1998 indicate that, in 1997, full-time workers lost an average of 7.4 days of work per year (6.2 days due to ill health and 1.2 days due to personal/family responsibilities). This is a serious problem for many organizations as productivity and efficiency of organizations can be affected when employees are absent from work or when employees spend time at work dealing with family matters. Absenteeism has been estimated to cost the Canadian economy between $2.7 and $7.7 billion annually (Duxbury and Higgins, 1998).

Assessment of absenteeism in this study

Several types of absenteeism were assessed in this study: (1) absenteeism due to ill health, (2) absenteeism due to family-related problems (i.e. sick child, elder care), (3) absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue (referred to in this document as a "mental health day") and (4) total absenteeism (total days off due to ill health, child care / elder care, and physical, mental or emotional exhaustion). Absenteeism data for the total sample due to each of these causes can be found in Appendix D. Absenteeism data broken down by gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment can be found in Appendix C. In all cases, three figures are provided: the percentage of the sample who was not absent at all, the percentage of the sample with moderate absenteeism (defined as one or two days' absence in a six-month period) and the percentage of the sample with high absenteeism (defined as three or more days' absence in a six-month period).

What do the data collected in conjunction with this research tell us about absenteeism within Canada's larger organizations?

Almost half of the sample have high levels of absenteeism

A plurality of the respondents to this survey (46% of the sample) missed three or more days of work in the six months prior to the survey being conducted. Only 31% were not absent at all. Almost one in four missed one or two days of work in a six-month period.

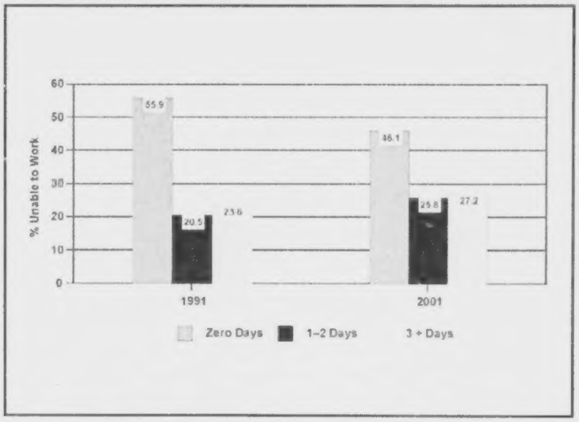
Ill health is the most common reason for missing work

More than one in four respondents to this survey missed three or more days of work due to ill health in the six months prior to the survey being conducted. Almost half (46%) did not miss work at all during this period due to ill health.

Absenteeism due to ill health has increased over the past decade

In the 1991 survey, we also collected data on absenteeism due to ill health (back then this was the only form of absenteeism we considered!). Examination of the two sets of data indicates that absenteeism due to ill health has increased over the past decade. More than half (56%) of the 1991 sample did not miss work due to ill health in the six months prior to the study being conducted, while just under one in four (24%) missed three or more days. In 2001, the number of respondents missing three or more days of work due to ill health had increased to 27% of the sample, while the percentage reporting zero days of absence due to ill health had declined to 46%. These data are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10
Absenteeism Due to Ill Health: 1991 Versus 2001



Emotional, physical and mental fatigue is also a leading cause of absenteeism

One in three of those who filled out the survey missed at least one day of work in the six months before the study was conducted because they were emotionally, physically or mentally fatigued. One in ten respondents missed three or more days of work due to these types of fatigue. The comments given at the end of the survey suggest that this form of absenteeism can be connected with organizational strategies of downsizing and doing more with less. These findings are not surprising given the onerous work demands of many of those who filled out this survey (see Report One) and high levels of job stress previously reported.

This type of absenteeism is worthy of note for three reasons. First, it is likely to represent the group of workers at higher risk for burnout. Second, this kind of absenteeism is relatively easily prevented if one pays attention to work environment issues (i.e. focuses on reducing work stress and role overload). Third, this type of absenteeism typically causes problems within the work group. When someone is away from work, others have to pick up the work of the absent individual (work does not disappear). In anorexic organizations, this "dumping" of work may increase the likelihood that this type of absenteeism will spread.

Few respondents missed work because of dependent care issues

Elder care responsibilities do not appear to be a major cause of absenteeism from work. Only one in ten of the respondents to this survey missed work in a six-month period because of elder care issues; only 4% of respondents missed three or more days of work during this time period because of elder care.

Child care concerns appear to have a stronger link to absenteeism than elder care—probably because more employees have children at home than have responsibility for elder care. Nevertheless, most respondents (76%) do not miss work due to issues with children. The majority of those who missed work due to child care concerns report moderate levels of absenteeism (16% of the sample missed one or two days of work in a six-month period).

Only 8% of the sample report high levels of absenteeism due to their responsibilities as a parent.

These data are consistent with the family to work interference data reported previously and support our contention that Canadians are dedicated employees who place a high priority on meeting their work obligations.

Who is more likely to report high levels of absenteeism?

The answers to this question with respect to the "total" absenteeism data (i.e. absenteeism due to all causes) are given below. The interested reader can find a more detailed discussion of the absenteeism data in Box 11.

Box 11

Who Is More Likely to Be Absent from Work?

Women and those employees in the public sector are more likely to be absent due to ill health

Women, regardless of job type, dependent care status and sector, are more likely than men to miss work due to ill health. This gender difference in absenteeism due to ill health is consistent with other studies in this area.

When gender is controlled for, there are no job-level or dependent care status differences in absenteeism due to ill health. There are, however, differences associated with sector. When gender is taken into account (i.e. men compared to men, women to women), respondents working in the public sector are more likely to miss work due to ill health than respondents in the NFP sector. Those in the NFP sector are, in turn, more likely to miss work due to ill health than respondents in the private sector. These data would suggest that the work environment within these sectors may be having a negative impact on the health of their employees.

Women and employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to miss work due to child care and elder care

Employees with dependent care status are much more likely to be absent due to child-related problems and elder-related issues than those without dependent care when gender is taken into account (i.e. men compared to men, women compared to women). When dependent care status is controlled for, women are more likely than men to miss work due to child care and elder care. Absenteeism due to child care and elder care is not, however, associated with sector of employment or job type when gender is taken into account. This is interesting in that it belies the myth that it is women in clerical and administrative positions who have the greatest burden for elder care. These findings suggest that absenteeism due to child care and elder care are more due to family demands and societal expectations than factors within the work environment (i.e. not linked to sector or job type).

Public sector employees are more likely to miss work due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue

The likelihood of missing a high number of days due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue is not associated with gender, job type or dependent care status. It is, however, strongly associated with sector of employment. Respondents in the public sector sample are more likely to take a high number of days off work due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue than employees in the private and NFP sector samples (gender taken into account). These findings are very consistent with those that were observed with absenteeism due to health problems, and reinforce our supposition that it is the work environment within the public sector that may be having a negative impact on the health of its employees. They also support the idea that demands at work affect this form of absenteeism rather than demands at home (i.e. not linked to dependent care).

Women are more likely than men to be absent from work

Absenteeism from work due to all causes is strongly associated with gender, dependent care status and sector of employment. Gender is the strongest predictor of absenteeism with women, about 10 percentage points more likely than men to report high levels of absenteeism.

Employees with dependent care responsibilities are also more likely to be absent from work

Having dependent care responsibilities (i.e. child care, elder care) is also strongly linked to higher absenteeism. Both men and women with dependent care responsibilities are 9 percentage points more likely than their counterparts without dependent care to have high levels of absenteeism.

Public sector employees are more likely to be absent from work

The data indicate that when gender is controlled for, employees in the public sector sample are the most likely to have high levels of absenteeism while employees in the private sector are the least likely to miss work. Consider the following:

- 59% of women in the public sector sample report high absenteeism compared to 46% of women in the NFP sector and 40% of the women in the private sector samples.

- 47% of the men in the public sector sample report high absenteeism compared to 34% of men in the NFP sector and 31% of men in the private sector sample.

Job type is not associated with absenteeism

It is interesting to note that, when gender is controlled for (i.e. women compared to women, men compared to men), job type is not associated with high absenteeism. This counters the perception in many organizations that women in clerical and administrative positions are more often away from work due to child care and elder care responsibilities.

Who has the highest levels of absenteeism?

Who has the highest levels of absenteeism? Women with dependent care responsibilities (55% with high levels of absenteeism) and women who work in the public sector (59% with high levels of absenteeism). Males in the public sector sample are more likely than any other group of men to be absent from work (47% with high levels of absenteeism).

4.2 The Costs of Imbalance: Impact of Work–Life Conflict on Organizations

To determine how work-life conflict affects organizations, we compared the experiences of respondents to our 2001 survey with high work-life conflict to those with low work-life conflict. High and low work-life conflict were defined in four[15] different ways: (1) using the role overload data, (2) using the work to family interference data, (3) using the family to work interference data and (4) using the caregiver strain data. A description of the methodology used in this section of the report is given in Box 7. The percentage of the 2001 sample with high, medium and low role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference and caregiver strain was discussed previously and can be found in Figures 2 and 4.

This chapter of the report is divided into four sections. The costs associated with high levels of role overload are addressed first. This is followed by an examination of the costs associated with work to family interference. The impacts of high family to work interference and caregiver strain are covered in the third section. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the dollar costs of increased absenteeism due to work-life conflict.

Work–life conflict is strongly associated with key work attitudes and outcomes

A quick examination of the data in Appendix E indicates that all the organizational outcomes included in this analysis (i.e. commitment, job satisfaction, job stress, intent to turnover, one's rating of the organization and absenteeism) are strongly associated with the four dimensions of work-life conflict included in this phase of the analysis. The discussion below will focus on the most striking of these associations (i.e. differences of 10% or greater between employees with high and low work-life conflict). The interested reader can, however, see the full extent to which work-life conflict affects the organization by referring to Appendix E.

4.2.1 What Is the Impact of High Role Overload on the Organization?

Just under 60% of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of role overload. What impact do these high levels of role overload have on key organizational outcomes?

Employees with high levels of role overload are less committed to their organization and less satisfied with their jobs

Examination of the data indicate that role overload is negatively[16] associated with:

- organizational commitment (49% of the respondents with high role overload report high levels of commitment vs. 66% of the respondents with low role overload);
- job satisfaction (35% of the respondents with high role overload report high levels of job satisfaction vs. 70% of the respondents with low role overload); and
- the employees' rating of the organization (40% of the respondents with high role overload rate their organization as an above average place to work vs. 66% of the respondents with low role overload).

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[15] The spillover measure is not used in this report to calculate the costs of imbalance. The way this variable was quantified (negative spillover, no spillover, positive spillover) makes it inappropriate for the kinds of data analysis performed in this section (the other four measures of work-life conflict use a Likert-scale format). Furthermore, it should be noted that negative work to family spillover is conceptually very similar to work to family interference. As such, analysis done with just the negative spillover responses can be considered to be redundant.

[16] A negative association means that as the levels of work-life conflict increase, the levels of outcome decrease (i.e. as overload increases, commitment decreases). A positive association, however, means that as the levels of work-life conflict increase, so do the levels of organizational outcomes (i.e. as overload increases, so does job stress).

In other words, employees with high role overload are half as likely as those with low role overload to report high levels of job satisfaction. Those with low role overload are 1.3 times as likely as those with high role overload to be highly committed to their employer and 1.7 times as likely to have a positive view of their employer.

Employees who are overloaded are less likely to be satisfied with their workloads and work schedules

Why are those with high role overload less likely to be satisfied with their jobs? The data indicate that those with high role overload are less likely to be satisfied with their workloads (41% difference between high and low role overload with respect to this facet of job satisfaction), the number of hours they work (38% difference) and the schedule of their work hours (23 percentage points difference).

Employees with high levels of role overload report higher levels of job stress and absenteeism

Also cause for concern are the data showing that role overload is positively associated with:

- job stress (50% the respondents with high role overload report high levels of job stress vs. 9% of the respondents with low role overload);
- intent to turnover (34% of the respondents with high role overload report that they are thinking of leaving their current organization once a week or more vs. 15% of the respondents with low role overload);
- total absenteeism (54% of the respondents with high role overload indicate that they had missed three or more days of work in the past six months vs. 33% of the respondents with low role overload);
- absenteeism due to physical health problems (31% of the respondents with high role overload indicate that they had missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to ill health vs. 20% of the respondents with low role overload); and
- absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue (14% of the respondents with high role overload indicate that they had missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue vs. 4% of the respondents with low role overload).

These data can be stated another way to further illustrate the serious consequences to the organization of high levels of role overload. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 5.6 times more likely to report high levels of job stress;
- 3.5 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue;
- 2.8 times more likely to miss work due to child care problems;
- 2.3 times more likely to report high intent to turnover; and
- 1.6 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism, all factors considered, and to miss three or more days of work in a six-month period due to ill health.

Employees who are overloaded are more likely to say they are thinking of leaving because their work environment is frustrating and because they want more balance in their lives

Why are those with high role overload more likely to be thinking of leaving the organization? The data indicate that compared to those with low role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 12.5 times more likely to say they would leave because their work expectations are unrealistic;
- 4.7 times more likely to say they would leave because they want more time for their family and/or themselves;
- 3.5 times more likely to say they would leave because they are frustrated with their work environment;
- 3.6 times more likely to say they would leave because their work environment is non-supportive;
- 3.0 times more likely to say they would leave because their values are not the same as their organization; and
- 2.6 times more likely to say they would leave because they perceive that they are not recognized for their efforts.

In other words, overloaded employees are more likely to say they would leave to escape unrealistic workload and frustrations at work and to gain more balance and time.

4.2.2 What Is the Impact of High Work to Family Interference on the Organization?

Just under 30% of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of work to family interference. What impact do these high levels of work to family interference have on key organizational outcomes?

Employees who have high levels of work to family interference are less committed to their organization and less satisfied with their jobs

The impact of work to family interference is very similar to that observed with role overload. Work to family interference is negatively associated with:

- organizational commitment (44% of the respondents with high work to family interference report high levels of commitment vs. 62% of the respondents with low work to family interference);
- job satisfaction (24% of the respondents with high work to family interference report high levels of job satisfaction vs. 66% of the respondents with low work to family interference); and
- the employee's rating of the organization (33% of the respondents with high work to family interference rate their organization as an above average place to work vs. 62% of the respondents with low work to family interference).

In other words, employees with low work to family interference were 2.8 times more likely than those with high levels of this form of interference to report high levels of job satisfaction, 1.4 times more likely to be highly committed to their employer and 1.9 times more likely to have a positive view of their employer.

Employees with high levels of work to family interference are less likely to be satisfied with their workloads and the number of hours they work

Why are those with high work to family interference less likely to be satisfied with their jobs? The data again are very similar to those observed with respect to role overload. Those with high work to family interference are less likely to be satisfied with their workloads (42% difference between high and low work to family interference), the number of hours they work (54% difference) and the schedule of their work hours (41% difference).

Employees with high levels of work to family interference report higher levels of job stress and intent to turnover

Also cause for concern are the data showing that high work to family interference is positively associated with job stress and intent to turnover. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of work to family interference, employees with high work to family interference are:

- 6.0 times more likely to report high levels of job stress; and
- 2.8 times more likely to report high intent to turnover.

While work to family interference is also associated with total absenteeism and absence due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue, the associations are not as strong as those observed with respect to role overload.

Employees with high levels of work to family interference are more likely to be thinking of leaving to get more balance in their lives

Why are those with high work to family interference more likely to be thinking of leaving the organization? The data indicate that compared to those with low work to family interference, employees with high work to family interference are:

- 6.7 times more likely to say they would leave because they want more time for their family and/or themselves;
- 6.6 times more likely to say they would leave because their work expectations are unrealistic;
- 4.1 times more likely to say they would leave because their work environment is non-supportive;
- 3.3 times more likely to say they would leave because their values are not the same as their organization;
- 2.8 times more likely to say they would leave because their work environment is frustrating;
- 2.6 times more likely to say they would leave because they perceive that they are not recognized for their efforts; and
- 2.4 times more likely to say they would leave because of personality conflicts at work.

4.2.3 What Is the Impact of High Family to Work Interference and Caregiver Strain on the Organization?

Ten percent of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of family to work interference, approximately the same percentage who experience high levels of caregiver strain at least several days a week. Another 17% of the sample experience high levels of caregiver strain on a weekly basis. What impact do these high levels of family to work interference and caregiver strain have on key organizational outcomes?

Employees with high levels of family to work interference and caregiver strain are more likely to be absent from work

The data indicate that the mechanism through which these forms of work-life conflict operates is quite different from what was observed with role overload and work to family interference. While family to work interference and caregiver strain are negatively associated with commitment, job satisfaction and one's rating of their organization, and positively associated with job stress and intent to turnover, the associations are less than were observed with role overload and work to family interference. Both of these forms of work-life conflict are, however, strongly associated with absenteeism.

Compared to their counterparts with low levels of family to work interference, employees with high levels of family to work interference are:

- 7.0 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to child care problems;
- 3.0 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months (all causes combined);
- 1.5 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to ill health; and
- 1.8 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to emotional, mental or physical fatigue.

Compared to their counterparts with low levels of caregiver strain, employees with high levels of caregiver strain are:

- 13.0 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to elder care problems;
- 1.8 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue;
- 1.4 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months (all causes combined); and
- 1.4 times more likely to have missed three or more days of work in the past six months due to ill health.

In other words, family to work interference and caregiver strain are highly associated with increased absenteeism. The etiology of this absenteeism does, however, appear to be different between these two forms of work-life conflict. Those with high family to work interference appear more likely to miss work due to child care issues. Those with higher levels of caregiver strain are more likely to miss work due to elder care issues.

4.2.4 Estimating the Costs of High Work-Life Conflict Due to Increased Absenteeism

Until now, we have used outcome measures to examine the indirect costs of work-life conflict that are borne by Canadian organizations. This section of the report will take the discussion one step further by attempting to assign a dollar value to absenteeism associated with high levels of work-life conflict. A complete discussion of the methodology used to estimate the costs associated with work absences is beyond the scope of this study but can be found in Duxbury, Higgins and Johnson (1999). A summary of relevant details is given for the interested reader in Appendix F.

In the following section, we discuss three sets of data:

- **Prevalence**: The proportion of the workforce exposed to the risk factor. Four risk factors are examined: high role overload, high work to family interference, high family to work interference, and high caregiver strain;
- **Relative risk**: The proportion of absence occurrence that can be associated with each of these risk factors; and
- **Etiologic fraction**: The percentage of the absence occurrence that would not have occurred had each of these risk factors been absent.

In all cases, the calculations were undertaken as described in Appendix F. Key data are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Estimating the Costs of Absenteeism Due to High Work-Life Conflict

	Total Days Lost in Canada[17]	Etiologic Fraction	Excess Days Absent Attributable to This Form of Work–Life Conflict	Cost/Day[18]	Cost of Absenteeism Attributable to This Form of Work–Life Conflict
Role Overload	79 million	0.24	19 million	$161	$3.1 billion
Work to Family Interference	79 million	0.065	5.1 million	$161	$830 million
Family to Work Interference	79 million	0.035	2.8 million	$161	$450 million
Caregiver Strain	79 million	0.086	6.8 million	$161	$1.1 billion

While Appendix F also includes calculations for prevalence, relative risk and etiologic fraction by gender and job type and gender and dependent care status, the cost estimates were done for the total workforce. These other analyses are, however, useful for identifying high-risk groups.

Cost of absenteeism due to high role overload over $3 billion per year

Almost 58% of the employees working for Canada's larger employers are at high risk for role overload. Employees with high role overload missed 8.8 days of work per year while those with low role overload missed only 5.7 days (i.e. relative risk of absenteeism associated with role overload is 1.6). The etiologic fraction of role overload is therefore 24% (i.e. employers could reduce absenteeism in their organization by 24% if they eliminated high levels of role overload). The direct cost of absenteeism due to high role overload is calculated to be approximately $3 billion per year.

Cost of absenteeism due to high work to family interference almost $1 billion per year

Just over one in four (28%) of the respondents to this survey are at high risk with respect to work to family interference. Employers could reduce absenteeism in their organizations by 6.5% if they eliminated high levels of work to family interference—a savings of almost $1 billion per year in direct costs alone.

Cost of absenteeism due to high family to work interference just under half a billion dollars per year

While only one in ten of the respondents to this survey puts family ahead of work (i.e. high levels of family to work interference), the cost of absenteeism associated with this form of work–life conflict is just under half a billion dollars a year in direct costs alone.

Cost of absenteeism due to high caregiver strain just over $1 billion per year

One in four respondents to this study report high levels of caregiver strain. These high levels of caregiver strain end up costing Canadian employers just over $1 billion per year in increased absenteeism. These costs can be expected to increase in the future as the proportion of the workforce with elder care responsibilities increases (see Report One for a discussion of this issue).

Costs of absenteeism due to high work–life conflict are likely much higher than estimated in this study

When reviewing these cost estimates, it should be noted that the dollar value assigned per day of absenteeism ($161)[19] is conservative, in that it is based on the total workforce and includes only the direct costs associated with absence from work. The indirect costs associated with absenteeism (e.g. higher workloads for others within the unit, inability to meet deadlines, under-performance in a unit, client dissatisfaction, replacement of the employee during the absence, "learning curves" during the replacement, and reduced productivity) are not included in our calculations. Nor do they include the costs of employee benefits to help workers cope, such as increased use of employee assistance programs. The *Canadian Attendance Management Guide* reports that the "cost of absenteeism can easily amount to 1.5 to 2 times the employee's wage for each day they miss" (Tangri, 2003). When indirect costs were included, the cost of absenteeism due to role overload is estimated to be between $4.5 and $6 billion per year. Indirect and direct costs due to high levels of work to family interference are $1.5 to $2 billion per year. Total costs (direct and indirect) of absenteeism due to high levels of family to work interference are approximately $1 billion per year, and costs due to caregiver strain are estimated to be between $1 and $2 billion per year.

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[17] Akyeampong, E. (2001). Fact Sheet on work Absences. *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Winter, 47-50.

[18] Statistics Canada. (2001). *Income Trends in Canada 1980-1999*, CD-ROM Catalogue 13F0022XCB.

[19] Statistics Canada. (2001). *Income Trends in Canada 1980–1999*, CD-ROM Catalogue 13F0022XCB.

Finally, it should be noted that these cost estimates were calculated using data on only those within the high-risk groups. Calculations (not shown) indicate that the estimates increase substantially (i.e. more than double) if we also include those at moderate risk (i.e. moderate levels of work to family and family to work interference).

How can employers afford not to address issues of work–life conflict?

The direct costs of high work–life conflict with respect to absenteeism are very high—$3 to $5 billion a year in direct costs, $4.5 to $10 billion when direct and indirect costs are included. The data in Table 3 indicate that a significant proportion of the absenteeism within Canada's larger workplaces can be linked to two factors: high role overload and high caregiver strain.

Role overload appears to be the greatest culprit (i.e. absenteeism would be approximately 24% lower if employers could eliminate high levels of this form of work–life conflict). These findings suggest that the downsizing strategies implemented by many employers throughout the 1980s and 1990s and the concomitant increase in employee workloads (see Report One) have backfired. The data reviewed in this study indicate that the savings in payroll (i.e. salary and benefit dollars) costs obtained through downsizing may be offset by substantial increases in dollars lost due to higher absenteeism for the "survivors." The data reviewed in this section indicate that employers need to recognize that they overload their employees at a cost—and that the cost is substantial to their bottom line ($3 to $6 billion per year). Work–life conflict is not only a moral issue—it is a business issue and needs to be addressed as such.

Caregiver strain is also problematic (i.e. absenteeism would be 9% lower if high levels of this form of work–life conflict could be eliminated). These findings suggest that aging of the Canadian workforce and the greater need to provide elder care is overwhelming employees' abilities to cope with both work and family demands. The lack of social and governmental support for elder care as well as inflexible work schedules mean that employees with elder care commitments often have no choice but to miss work and/or take an unpaid leave of absence. If nothing is done to alleviate the demands placed on these workers, absenteeism due to this form of work–life conflict is likely to increase dramatically in the next decade as more baby boomers assume responsibility for the care of their parents. These findings indicate that employers should stop thinking of flexible work arrangements and family-friendly benefits as something they are doing to accommodate employees. Rather, they should be viewed as strategic measures which have been implemented to help the organization remain competitive and reduce operating costs.

4.3 Summary and Conclusions

How are Canada's larger employers doing? Has their situation changed over time? What is the link between work–life conflict and key work outcomes? What impact do gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment have on these issues? The data reviewed in this chapter of the report and summarized in Table 4 were used to answer these questions.

Table 4
Summary of Between Group Differences in Organizational Outcomes

	% High	Gender	Job Type	DC	Sector of Employment
Organizational Commitment	53%	No gender difference	For M., Mgr./Prof. > "Other" No difference for W.	No DC differences	For W., Priv. > PS, NFP For M., Priv., NFP > PS
Job Satisfaction	46%	No gender difference	For M., Mgr./Prof. > "Other" No difference for W.	No DC differences	For W., Priv., PS > NFP For M., Priv, NFP > PS
Job Stress	35%	No gender difference	Mgr./Prof. > "Other"	DC > No DC	NFP, PS > Priv.
Intent to Turnover	28%	M > W	No job type difference	No DC differences	PS, NFP > Priv.
Rating of the Organization	48%	No gender difference	For M., Mgr./Prof. > "Other" No difference for W.	No DC differences	Priv. > PS, NFP
Absenteeism Due to All Causes	46%	W > M	No job type difference	DC > No DC	PS > NFP > Priv.
Absenteeism Due to Ill Health	28%	W > M	No job type difference	No DC differences	PS > NFP > Priv.
Absenteeism Due to Child Care	8%	W > M	No job type difference	DC > No DC	No sector differences
Absenteeism Due to Elder Care	4%	W > M	No job type difference	DC > No DC	No sector differences
Absenteeism Due to Emotional, Physical and Mental Fatigue	10%	No gender difference	No job type difference	No DC differences	PS > NFP, Priv.

Key to Table: *W = Women; M = Men; DC = Dependent Care; Mgr. = Manager; Prof. = Professional; NFP = Not-for-Profit; PS = Public Sector; Priv. = Private Sector*

So ... how are Canadian employers doing?

1. *The majority of Canada's larger employers cannot be considered to be best practice employers.*

   The data reviewed in this report paint a disturbing picture for Canada's larger employers. Only about half of the employees who participated in this study are highly committed to their employer, satisfied with their job and rate their organization as "an above average place to work." One in three reports high levels of job stress and one in four is thinking of leaving his or her current organization once a week or more. Absenteeism (especially absenteeism due to physical and mental health issues) also appears to be a substantial problem for Canadian employers, with half of the respondents reporting high levels of absenteeism (defined as three or more days of absence in the six months prior to the study being conducted). One in four respondents missed three or more days of work in a six-month period due to ill health, while one in ten reported high absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue.

How has the situation changed over time?

2. *Conditions within Canadian organizations have declined over time.*

   High job stress and absenteeism due to ill health have become more problematic over the past decade. Almost three times as many respondents report high job stress in 2001 (35%) as in 1991 (13%). More than half (56%) of those in the 1991 sample did not miss work due to ill health in the six months prior to the study being conducted, while just under one in four (24%) missed three or more days. In 2001, the number of respondents missing three or more days of work due to ill health had increased to 28% of the sample while the proportion reporting zero days' absence due to ill health had declined to 46%.

During the same time period, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have also appeared to decline. Whereas almost two thirds of employees in 1991 were highly satisfied with their jobs (62%) and committed to their organization (66%), approximately half report high satisfaction (46%) or high organizational commitment (53%) in 2001. Such findings are not surprising given the fact that workloads (see Report One) and work–life conflict also increased over the same time period. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that many of the management practices instituted by Canada's larger organizations over the past decade (e.g. downsizing, re-engineering, focus on hours not output, pay freezes, restructuring) have had a negative impact on how Canadian employees perceive their job and their employer.

What is the impact of key contextual variables on key organizational outcomes?

3. *How an employee feels about their organization (i.e. commitment, view of the organization as a place to work, intent to turnover) and their job (i.e. job satisfaction, job stress) has more to do with the type of work being done and the work environment (i.e. job type and sector of employment) than demands outside of work (i.e. gender, dependent care status).*

   Who is more likely to report positive organizational outcomes? Negative organizational outcomes? The data reviewed in this section of the report indicate that an employee's view of both their organization and their job as well as the amount of job stress they experience and their intent to turnover can be linked to the type of work being done and the work environment (i.e. job type, sector of employment) rather than gender or dependent care status. In other words, it is what you do within the work setting and how you are treated at work rather than responsibilities outside of work or gender (i.e. men and women react in similar fashions to the same work stimuli) that influence key organizational outcomes. Taken as a whole, the data indicate that managers and professionals are more committed to their organizations and satisfied with their jobs than their non-professional counterparts, despite the fact that their jobs are associated with higher levels of stress. The data also indicate that employees in the private sector generally feel more positive about their employer and their jobs than their counterparts in the public and NFP sectors.

4. *Absenteeism due to child care and elder care problems is associated with gender and the number of demands an employee has outside of work (i.e. dependent care status), while absenteeism due to emotional, physical and mental health problems is associated with sector of employment.*

   The link between absenteeism and the context variables under examination in this study (i.e. gender, job type, sector of employment, dependent care status) is more complex. Absenteeism due to child care and elder care (and total absenteeism because it is made up of these two kinds of absenteeism) is strongly associated with gender and demands outside of work (i.e. women and employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to report high levels of these types of absenteeism and, as noted in Report One, high family demands). Absenteeism due to poor emotional, physical and mental health, on the other hand, is associated primarily with sector of employment (i.e. work environment), with Canadians in the public sector reporting the highest levels and private sector employees reporting the lowest levels of absenteeism due to these causes.

Why should organizations worry about work–life conflict?

5. *High work–life conflict is associated with increased absenteeism and substandard organizational performance.*

   The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of substandard organizational performance and increased absenteeism costs. In other words, high work–life conflict has a negative impact on an organization's bottom line.

6. *The four components of work–life conflict differentially impact the organization.*

   The data reviewed in this report indicate that the four components of work–life conflict examined in this study have different impacts on the organization. These differences are worthy of note in that they provide quite different motivations for addressing this issue as well as different prescriptions with respect to change.

7. *Role overload is positively associated with physical and mental health problems.*

   Employees who have high role overload are less committed to their organization, report higher job stress, are less satisfied with their jobs (due largely to dissatisfaction with workloads, hours worked and work schedules), are more likely to be absent from work (due largely to physical and mental health problems), are more likely to be thinking of leaving the organization (to escape frustrating and non-supportive work environments and to get more time for themselves and more recognition for their efforts), and have a less favourable view of their employer. In other words, organizations that have a higher proportion of their workforce with high levels of this form of work–life conflict are likely to have difficulties recruiting and retaining employees and to face increased costs associated with poor physical and mental health (i.e. greater absenteeism, higher prescription drug costs, greater employee assistance program use).

8. *Work to family interference is negatively associated with recruitment and retention.*

   The impact of work to family interference on the organization is very similar to that observed with role overload. This is not surprising given the high correlation between these two constructs. It should be noted, however, that the respondents with high levels of work to family interference report the lowest levels of organizational commitment (only 44% with high commitment), the lowest levels of job satisfaction (only 24% are highly satisfied with their jobs), the highest levels of job stress (66% report high job stress), and the highest intent to turnover (44% are thinking of leaving weekly or more with 24% of them thinking of leaving several times a week or daily) of any of the respondents in the study. Organizational commitment, intent to turnover and rating of the organization have all been found to be strongly associated with recruitment and retention issues.

   The data indicate that work to family interference affects how people feel about their employer. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that employees who perceive that they have to put work ahead of family (e.g. feel that they have to make a choice between career advancement and family or between job security and family) are less committed to the organization and more likely to be thinking of leaving the organization than their counterparts who do not perceive such a choice is necessary.

   The link between job stress and work to family interference is very strong and worthy of note. From these data it is impossible, however, to determine why the association is so strong. Two explanations are suggested by the data. First, it may be that employees who work in high-stress jobs are more likely to take their work home with them mentally. Alternatively, it may be that high stress jobs require the employee to work a lot of extra hours. The negative outcomes associated with high work to family interference in this case could, therefore, be partly attributed to its association with high role overload.

9. *Family to work interference and caregiver strain have minimal impact on the organizational attitudes examined in this study (i.e. organizational commitment, job satisfaction, rating of the organization as a place to work).*

   Family to work interference and caregiver strain do not have the same type of association with work outcomes as observed for role overload and work to family interference. The association between these forms of work–life conflict and organizational commitment, job stress, job satisfaction, intent to turnover and rating of the organization as a place to work, while statistically significant, is not substantive.

10. *Family to work interference is positively associated with absenteeism due to child care problems.*

    From the organization's perspective, the main consequence of high family to work interference is higher absenteeism due to child care problems. Respondents with high levels of this form of interference were seven times more likely to miss three or more days of work in a six-month period due to child care than those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict. It should be noted, in fact, that this is the only form of work–life conflict which is associated with this form of absenteeism. These findings suggest that organizations could reduce this form of absenteeism by making it easier for employees with dependent care responsibilities to vary when and where they work.

11. *Caregiver strain is positively associated with absenteeism due to elder care problems and emotional, physical or mental fatigue.*

    Employees with high caregiver strain are more likely to take time off to deal with elder care problems and because they are emotionally, physically or mentally fatigued. In fact, this is the only dimension of work–life conflict associated with absenteeism due to elder care problems. Respondents with high caregiver strain are more likely to find elder care overwhelming and to say that it is a financial strain. It is difficult from these data to determine if these types of elder care issues lead to high caregiver strain or if people who put family first are more likely to find it a strain to continue to work (because they need the money) when they would prefer to stay at home and care for an elderly family member. Future research is needed to clarify this association.

12. *Employers could substantially decrease absenteeism in their organizations if they reduced work–life conflict.*

    Our calculations indicate that employers could reduce absenteeism in their organization by:

    - 24.2% if they eliminated high levels of role overload;
    - 6.5% if they eliminated high levels of work to family interference;
    - 3.5% if they eliminated high levels of family to work interference; and
    - 8.6% if they could eliminate high levels of caregiver strain.

13. *The direct costs of absenteeism due to high work–life conflict are approximately $3 to $5 billion per year. If indirect costs were included, this total would increase to between $4.5 billion (conservative estimate) and $10 billion.*

    The data collected in this study provide us with the opportunity to estimate the potential financial cost of work–life conflict to Canadian organizations. Our estimates suggest that, in 2001:

    - The direct costs of absenteeism due to high role overload were approximately $3 billion per year. Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism due to role overload were estimated to be between $4.5 (conservative estimate) and $6 billion per year.
    - The direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of work to family interference were estimated to be almost $1 billion per year (costs increase to $1.5 to $2 billion if one also includes the indirect costs of this absenteeism).
    - The direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of family to work interference were estimated to be just under $0.5 billion a year in direct costs (approximately $1 billion per year when indirect costs are also included in the total).
    - The direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of caregiver strain were calculated to be just over $1 billion per year (indirect costs are estimated at another $1 to $2 billion).

Chapter 5

Why Should Society Care About Work–Life Conflict? Effects on the Family

What do we know about the impact of work on key family outcomes? The answer is "not much!" In November 2000, the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* produced a special review issue which provided an overview of family research done in the 1990s. The journal commissioned 23 articles for the 10-year review. The authors of these reviews were instructed to produce a comprehensive and integrative critique of the advances in theory and research within their area of expertise. Only one of the 23 articles in this journal dealt with the issue of work and family. This article was written by Perry-Jenkins, Repetti and Crouter, well-known researchers in this area. They noted that research in the area of work and family conducted in the 1990s could be grouped into four categories:

- The maternal employment literature: Research in this area explores the impact of maternal employment on the well-being of children.
- The work socialization literature: Studies in this area are based on the belief that occupational conditions such as autonomy and complexity shape the values of workers who then apply these values to their non-work roles.
- The work stress literature: Research in this area focuses on how work stress affects worker well-being.
- The multiple role literature: Studies in this area explore how individuals balance roles such as parent, spouse and worker and the consequences for health and family relationships.

It was noted in this issue that, while a great deal is known about families (e.g. how to think about them, how to study them, personal relationships) less is known about how work affects key family indicators. Weaknesses of the research in this area noted by Perry-Jenkins et al. include (among others) its unidimensional view of work; the lack of attention to the role of fathers and extended kin in the work and family relationship; inattention to relevant social context factors such as occupation and personality; lack of attention to the connection between role enactment (e.g. the behaviours linked to the role), role responsibility and the meaning attached to a role; and issues of definition (what is work? what is family?). They also noted that the maternal employment and daycare literatures are virtually separate fields of study "despite the fact that they are so intimately intertwined in the real world."

This chapter of the report examines how work–life conflict influences Canadian employees' view of their family domains and their performance of key family roles. The following questions are answered in this section:

- How well adapted are Canadian families? What is the link between family adaptation and work–life conflict?
- How satisfied are Canadian employees with their family lives? What is the link between family life satisfaction and work–life conflict?
- How satisfied are Canadian employees with their abilities as a parent? What is the link between parental satisfaction and work–life conflict?
- How often do Canadian employees engage in activities associated with positive parenting? What is the link between positive parenting and work–life conflict?
- How integrated are Canadian families? What is the link between family integration and work–life conflict?

It should be noted that none of these issues was addressed in the special issue of the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* noted earlier. In fact, very little literature could be found linking work–life conflict to these family outcomes.[20]

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 1 provides a summary of how Canadian families are doing with respect to each of the key outcomes noted above. Section 2 looks at the impact of high work–life conflict on each of these key family outcomes. Key findings as well as relevant conclusions are summarized in the third section. The data discussed in this section of the report can be found in Appendix G. Data on family outcomes for the total sample are given in Figure 11 (family adaptation, family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction) and Figure 12 (family integration, positive parenting). Since none of these measures was included in our 1991 survey, it is not possible to look at how family outcomes have changed over time.

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[20] Interested readers are referred to the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62(4): 2000.

5.1 Report Card on Canadian Families

This section is divided into five subsections. Data on family adaptation are discussed first. These are followed by a discourse on family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction, positive parenting and family integration. The data discussed in this section are shown in Figures 11 and 12. These data are broken down by gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status in Appendix G.

Figure 11
Family Outcomes

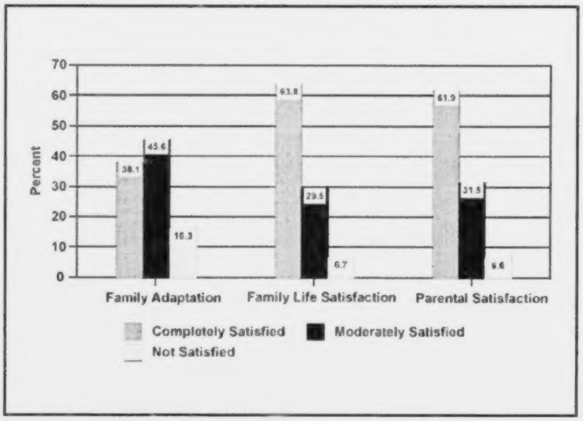
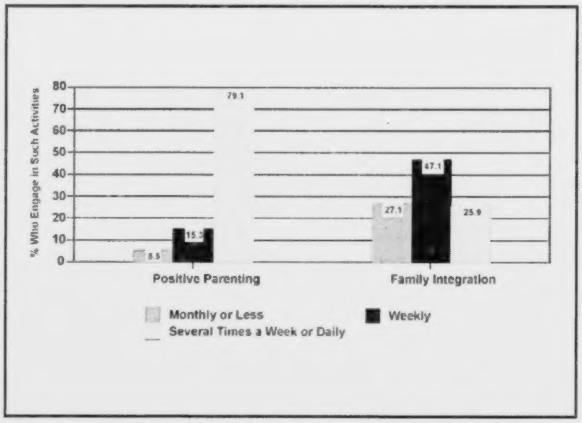


Figure 12
Positive Parenting and Family Integration



5.1.1 Family Adaptation

Family adaptation is defined as occurring when family members use their strengths and capabilities to reduce the demands of the situation, promote individual development of members, and achieve a sense of congruency in family functioning. Families high in family adaptation have a general sense of physical and psychological family health that is referred to as family well-being (Leske and Jiricka, 1996).

What do we know about family well-being from this study?

Most Canadians report moderate levels of family well-being

A plurality of the Canadians who responded to this survey (46%) report moderate levels of family well-being (i.e. they are only moderately satisfied with the way their family deals with conflicts, spends its leisure time, communicates with each other). While 38% of respondents feel that their family is well adapted, 16% (i.e. almost one in six of the respondents) are not satisfied with their family's current ability to adapt and function.

Parents and those with elder care responsibilities are less likely to perceive that their family is well adapted

Perceptions of family adaptation depend very much on dependent care responsibilities. Employees who live in families with child and/or elder care responsibilities are less likely to feel that their family is well adapted than employees without such responsibilities. For example, 35% of the men in our sample with dependent care responsibilities report that they are completely satisfied with their level of family adaptation versus 47% of the men without such responsibilities. Similarly, only 32% of the women in the sample with dependent care responsibilities report that they are completely satisfied with their level of family adaptation versus 44% of the women without such responsibilities. It should be noted, however, that employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to give their families moderate rather than negative scores on family adaptation, suggesting that they feel there is room for improvement.

Family adaptation levels are not associated with gender, job type or sector of employment. It appears that employed Canadians who live in families without child or elder care responsibilities perceive that their families are well adapted—but employed Canadians with dependent care responsibilities feel that their family well-being is not as good as it could be.

5.1.2 Family Life Satisfaction

Family life satisfaction is defined as overall satisfaction with family relationships. The measure used in this study defines family life satisfaction to include the respondent's satisfaction with their family life, their relationship with their children, their spouse, their parents and their in-laws.

What do we know about family life satisfaction from the data collected in association with this research?

Two thirds of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their relationships at home

Almost two thirds of those who responded to our survey indicated that they are completely satisfied with their family relationships—only 7% are not satisfied. It is interesting to note that a substantially higher percentage of the sample expressed satisfaction with their family life than were satisfied with their jobs.

Parents and those with elder care responsibilities are less likely to be satisfied with their family life

The findings regarding family life satisfaction are virtually identical to those observed with family well-being. Satisfaction with family life is not associated with gender, job type or sector of employment. It is, however, strongly associated with dependent care status. Employees who live in families with child and/or elder care responsibilities are less likely to be completely satisfied with their family life than employees without such responsibilities. Sixty-two percent of the men and 60% of the women with dependent care responsibilities report that they are completely satisfied with their family life versus 68% of the men and women without such responsibilities. Again, however, it should be noted that people with dependent care responsibilities are more likely to be moderately satisfied with their family life than dissatisfied. Such data reinforce our contention that employees with dependent care responsibilities feel that things could be improved within their family domain.

5.1.3 Parental Satisfaction

Parental satisfaction is defined to be perceived satisfaction with the parenting role and one's ability as a parent. Parental satisfaction in this study includes satisfaction with respect to their relationship with their children, the behaviour of their children, themselves as a parent and their partner's relationship with their children.

What do the data collected in association with this research tell us about parental satisfaction?

Over sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their abilities as a parent

Just over 60% of this sample indicated that they are completely satisfied with their ability as a parent—only 7% are not satisfied. Almost one in three is moderately satisfied.

Men are more satisfied with their parenting abilities than women

Parental satisfaction depends on both gender and dependent care status. Employees who live in families with active child and/or elder care responsibilities (i.e. children still live at home and time is spent each week in child and/or elder care) are less likely to be completely satisfied with their abilities as a parent than employees without such dependent care responsibilities.[21] Men, regardless of job type or sector of employment, are more likely to report high parental satisfaction than women—an interesting finding given the fact that women spend more time in child and elder care per week than men (see Report One).

5.1.4 Positive Parenting

The National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth, jointly administered by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, has identified a number of behaviours which appear to be associated with positive parenting. Five of these behaviours were included in this study. Respondents were asked how often they laughed together with their children, listened to their children's ideas and opinions, ate together as a family, made sure their children knew they were appreciated, and knew where their children were. Higher scores on this measure reflect a greater amount of time spent in behaviours associated with being a good parent. A summary of key findings from these data are reviewed below.

The majority of working Canadians are spending time in activities with their children

The vast majority of the Canadians in this sample (79%) say that they are engaging in behaviours associated with positive parenting several times a week or daily. One in five parents engages in such behaviours once a week or less.

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[21] It will be recalled (see Box 5) that dependent care status was defined as spending at least an hour a week on child and/or elder care. Some of the respondents who are in the no dependent care group have older children who are no longer at home. It is in this context that they answered this question.

Which respondents spend less time engaging in activities associated with positive parenting?

Only one factor seems to make a difference in the tendency to engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting—dependent care status. Not surprisingly, those employees with children at home are more likely than those without children at home to engage in activities with their children. This finding is consistent with the fact that employees with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of role overload than their counterparts without such responsibilities and have more demands on their time. It is also consistent with the literature that says multiple role holders have more work–life conflict than those with fewer roles.

5.1.5 Family Integration

Family integration is defined in terms of the stability of the family unit and the amount of security family members get by being part of the family and participating with the family in joint activities and functions. Well-integrated, stable families are defined to be ones in which parents frequently help their children with their school work and problems, attend events like movies together as a family, have family time together during the week, work around the home together and do things with their children they know they will enjoy.

Data on family integration are reviewed in the section below.

One in four working Canadians rarely engages in activities linked to family stability

While one in four of the respondents to this survey engages in those activities found to be associated with higher levels of family stability (e.g. attending events as a family, working around the house together, having family time during the week) several times a week or daily, almost half (47%) engage in them only weekly. More disturbing are the data showing that 27% of the sample say they rarely engage in such activities (i.e. monthly or less). It should be noted that the respondents who do not spend time in activities that have been linked to family stability are also more likely to report work to family interference.

Family integration was not linked to any of the context variables examined in this study (i.e. not linked to gender, job type, dependent care status or sector of employment). This suggests that issues with respect to family integration and stability are systemic within the Canadian workforce. It is also interesting to note that Canadians are more likely to say they engage in activities associated with positive parenting than they are to perceive that they practise those behaviours linked to a stable family unit. It may be that working Canadians are uncomfortable admitting how little time they spend with their children.

5.2 The Costs of Imbalance: Impact of Work–Life Conflict on Families

To determine how work–life conflict affects families, we compared the experiences of respondents to our 2001 survey with high work–life conflict to those with low work–life conflict. High and low work–life conflict were defined in four different ways: (1) using the role overload data, (2) using the work to family interference data, (3) using the family to work interference data and (4) using the child care strain data. The methodology used to undertake these comparisons is similar to that followed in Chapter Four. For the reasons noted in that chapter, spillover is not included in this analysis.

Data linking work–life conflict and family outcomes are presented in Appendix H. Examination of these data indicates that although work–life conflict affects family outcomes, the effect is not as pronounced as for the work outcomes.

This section is divided into four subsections. The costs associated with high levels of role overload are addressed first. This is followed by an examination of the costs associated with work to family interference. The impacts of high family to work interference and caregiver strain are covered in subsections 3 and 4 respectively. Again, to make the report more readable we will restrict our discussion to differences of 10% or greater.

5.2.1 What Is the Impact of High Role Overload on the Family?

Just under 60% of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of role overload. What impact do these high levels of role overload have on the employee's family?

Employees with high levels of role overload are less satisfied with their family life and their performance as a parent

Examination of the data indicates that role overload is negatively associated with:

- Family life satisfaction (80% of the respondents with low role overload are satisfied with their family life versus 58% of those with high role overload).
- Parental satisfaction (78% of the respondents with low role overload are satisfied with their parental abilities versus 56% of those with high role overload).

Employees with high levels of role overload are less likely to spend time in activities associated with family well-being and stability

Role overload is also negatively associated with:

- Family adaptation (60% of the respondents with low role overload live in families with high levels of adaptation vs. 30% of those with high role overload).
- Family integration (34% of the respondents with low role overload live in families with high levels of integration vs. 24% of those with high role overload).

In other words, employees with low role overload were 1.4 times as likely as their counterparts with high role overload to report high levels of family life and parental satisfaction and family integration and twice as likely to perceive high levels of family adaptation.

Taken as a whole, these data indicate that employees with high levels of role overload are less satisfied with their family lives, their ability to parent and less likely to experience high levels of family stability and well-being. This suggests that people who are rushed and exhausted (largely due to heavier work demands) do not have the time to enjoy their family lives or engage in activities to enhance their family experiences.

5.2.2 What Is the Impact of High Work to Family Interference on the Family?

One in four of the respondents to this study has high levels of work to family interference. What ramifications does this have on their family?

Employees who put work ahead of family can expect to experience serious repercussions on the family front

Work to family interference is negatively associated with all of the family outcomes examined in this study. Compared to their counterparts with high work to family interference, those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict are:

- 3.0 times as likely to engage frequently in activities associated with high levels of family integration;
- 2.2 times as likely to live in families with high levels of adaptation;
- 1.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their family life; and
- 1.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their parental abilities.

These findings indicate that employees who put work ahead of family can expect to experience serious repercussions on the family front. Such employees are less satisfied with their families and their abilities as a parent, less pleased with their family's well-being and less likely to live in a stable family unit. It is interesting to note that the relationship between family integration and work to family interference is particularly strong (only 12% of employees with high levels of work to family interference can find/make the time to engage in meaningful activities with their families).

5.2.3 What Is the Impact of High Family to Work Interference on the Family?

Ten percent of the respondents to this study have high levels of family to work interference. What ramifications does this have on their family?

Employees who experience high family to work interference are less likely to be satisfied with their family circumstances

High levels of family to work interference are negatively associated with three of the family outcomes examined in this study. Compared to their counterparts with high family to work interference, those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict are:

- 1.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their family life;
- 1.4 times as likely to be satisfied with their parental abilities; and
- 1.4 times as likely to live in families with high levels of adaptation.

These data indicate that employees who put family ahead of work are less satisfied with both their families and their abilities as a parent. They are also less likely to be happy with their family's well-being. It is interesting to note that compared to respondents with higher levels of the other forms of work–life conflict considered in this study, respondents with high family to work interference report the lowest levels of family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being. It is hard to tell the direction of causality here. Is it because they are dissatisfied that they have decided to put family first (e.g. trying to remedy the situation)? Alternatively, has the fact that they have met family demands at the expense of their work (and possibly career progression) made them more dissatisfied, critical or resentful of circumstances at home that have made such choices/sacrifices necessary?

5.2.4 What Is the Impact of High Caregiver Strain on the Family?

Nine percent of the respondents to this study have high levels of caregiver strain. What implications does high caregiver strain have on the family?

Employees with high caregiver strain have less time to spend on parenting

High levels of caregiver strain are negatively associated with two of the family outcomes examined in this study:

- Family life satisfaction (65% of the respondents with low caregiver strain are satisfied with their family life vs. 50% of those with high caregiver strain).
- Family adaptation (37% of the respondents with low caregiver strain report high levels of family adaptation vs. 28% of those with high caregiver strain).

While the difference is not substantive, respondents with high caregiver strain are less likely to report high levels of positive parenting than those with low caregiver strain (68% vs. 79%). This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that about one in three of the respondents in the high caregiver strain group is in the "sandwich group" and that the time devoted to elder care takes away from time that can be spent with children.

5.3 Summary and Conclusions

How are Canadian families doing? What is the link between work–life conflict and key family outcomes? What impact do gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment have on these issues? The data reviewed in this section of the report and summarized in Table 5 were used to answer these questions.

So ... how are Canadian families doing?

1. *The data in this report paint a mixed picture with respect to the "health" of the families in which Canadian employees live.*

   On a positive note, the majority of respondents are satisfied with their families and their performance as a parent and engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting several times a week or more. On a more cautionary note, only 38% of respondents are completely satisfied with their family's well-being and only one in four frequently engages in activities which have been linked to family stability.

What is the impact of key contextual variables on key family outcomes?

2. *Women are less satisfied than men with their performance as a parent.*

   According to the summary data in Table 5, there are very few between group differences. There was only one gender difference in the data—but it is worthy of note. Men were more likely than women to indicate that they were satisfied with their abilities as a parent. This gender difference is particularly interesting given the finding noted in Report One that women spend more time in child care than men. These findings suggest that many women judge their performance as a parent using outdated and perhaps unrealistic standards (e.g. compare themselves to their own mothers).

Table 5
Summary of Between Group Differences in Family Outcomes

	% High	Gender	Job Type	DC	Sector
Family Adaptation	38%	No gender differences	No job type differences	No DC > DC	No sector differences
Family Life Satisfaction	64%	No gender differences	No job type differences	No DC > DC	No sector differences
Parental Satisfaction	62%	M > W	No job type differences	No DC > DC	No sector differences
Positive Parenting	79%	No gender differences	No job type differences	DC > No DC	No sector differences
Family Integration	26%	No gender differences	No job type differences	No DC differences	No sector differences

Key to Table: *W = Women; M = Men; DC = Dependent Care; Mgr. = Manager; Prof. = Professional; NFP = Not-for-Profit; PS = Public Sector; Priv. = Private Sector*

3. *Family outcomes are not associated with job type or sector of employment.*

   Neither job type nor sector of employment is associated with any of the family outcomes examined in this study. This is somewhat reassuring in that it suggests that challenging work arrangements and work climates do not seem to be having any impact on key family outcomes. These data do not support the socialization literature which hypothesizes that employees bring work values home into their family environment.

4. *Family outcomes decline as family responsibilities increase.*

   Only one contextual factor was substantively associated with the family outcomes included in this study—dependent care status. Respondents who spent time each week in child care and/or elder care are less likely than those without such responsibilities to be satisfied with their family or their abilities as a parent. They are also less likely to agree that their families demonstrated high levels of well-being. They are, however, more likely to spend time engaging in those behaviours associated with being a good parent. In other words, family well-being and stability decline as family responsibilities increase.

Why should society worry about work–life conflict?

5. *High work–life conflict is associated with diminished levels of family life and parental satisfaction and impaired family functioning.*

   The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work–life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of impaired family functioning (i.e. lower levels of family well-being and stability, poorer performance of parenting roles) and reduced satisfaction with the family domain (lower levels of family life and parental satisfaction). In other words, high work–life conflict negatively affects employees' abilities to enjoy and nurture their families.

6. *Role overload and work to family interference have the most negative impact on the family.*

   Of the four types of work–life conflict examined, role overload and work to family interference seem to have the most negative impacts on families. In both cases, employees with high levels of work–life conflict are less satisfied with their family life and their ability to parent, less likely to feel that their families are well (i.e. report lower family adaptation) and less likely to feel that their families are stable and work together. Neither of these types of work–life conflict is significantly associated with positive parenting.

7. *Family to work interference is negatively associated with family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being.*

   Surprisingly, employees who put family ahead of work are also less likely than those with low levels of family to work interference to be satisfied with their family lives and their abilities as a parent. They are also less likely to be happy with their family's well-being. In fact, this group reports the lowest levels of family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being. The fact that family to work interference is not associated with family integration suggests that either people who put family ahead of work are doing so to keep their family units intact or the strategy of putting family first maintains family integrity. The costs of this strategy are clear, however—lower levels of satisfaction with the family domain.

8. *Caregiver strain is negatively associated with positive parenting behaviours.*

   Finally, although the effect is not substantive, high caregiver strain appears to have an impact on parenting behaviours (i.e. employees with high caregiver strain are less likely to engage in positive parenting behaviour). In this case, it would appear that the time and energy devoted to elder care activities are interfering with the time available for one's children.

Chapter 6

Why Should Society Care About Work–Life Conflict? Effects on Canadian Employees

Previous research in the area indicates that employee well-being is associated with the successful interaction between work and family domains. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that work–life conflict is a causal factor in physical diseases and poor mental health. The Canadian Mental Health Association, for example, reports that the interaction between work-related stress and domestic stress threatens an individual's sense of control, efficacy and competence with regard to personal health. In turn, this lowered sense of efficacy is strongly associated with perceptions of diminished "wellness."

Opposing pressures between work and home domains as well as stress at work and outside work may jeopardize an individual's well-being in a number of ways. This report examines how work–life conflict affects employees' mental health (operationalized to include perceived stress, depressed mood, burnout, and life satisfaction) as well as perceived physical health. Other data on the physical health of Canadian employees will be given in Report Three which deals with the link between work–life conflict and use of Canada's health care system.

The following questions are answered in this chapter:

- What percentage of employees working for Canada's larger firms report high levels of perceived stress? How has perceived stress changed over the past decade? What is the link between perceived stress and work–life conflict?
- What percentage of employees working for Canada's larger firms report high levels of depressed mood? How has depressed mood changed over the past decade? What is the link between depressed mood and work–life conflict?
- What percentage of employees working for Canada's larger firms report high levels of burnout? What is the link between burnout and work–life conflict?
- How satisfied are Canadian employees with their lives? How has this satisfaction changed over time? What is the link between life satisfaction and work–life conflict?
- How do Canadian employees rate their physical health? How has perceived physical health changed over the past decade? What is the link between perceived physical health and work–life conflict?

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 1 provides a summary of how employees working for Canada's larger employers are doing with respect to each of the key employee outcomes noted above. With one exception (data on burnout not collected in 1991), changes in the prevalence of each of these outcomes over the past decade are noted. Section 2 looks at the impact of high work–life conflict on each of these key outcomes. Key findings and relevant conclusions are presented in section 3. The data discussed in this chapter of the report can be found in Appendix I.

6.1 Report Card on Canadian Employees

Section 1 is divided into five subsections. Data on perceived stress are presented first. This is followed by sections devoted to depressed mood, burnout, life satisfaction and perceived physical health. The data discussed in this section are shown in Figures 13 and 14.

6.1.1 Perceived Stress

Perceived stress refers to the extent to which one perceives one's situation to be unpredictable, uncontrollable and burdensome. Individuals who report high levels of perceived stress are generally manifesting the symptoms we associate with "*dis*tress," including nervousness, frustration, irritability and generalized anxiety. Perceived stress has been linked to job dissatisfaction, depressed feelings, work absence and turnover. Perceptions of stress have been shown to be particularly high among employees who have difficulty balancing work and non-work demands.[22]

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[22] For a review of this literature, see Googins, 1991; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992, 1997; Quick et al., 1997; Duxbury and Higgins, 1998.

Figure 13
Employee Outcomes

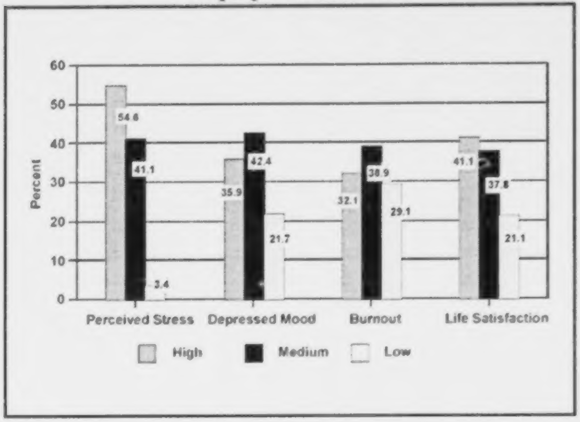


Figure 14
Change in Employee Outcomes Over Time:
1991 Versus 2001

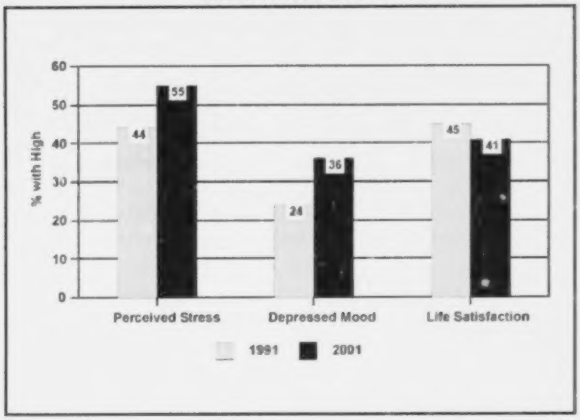
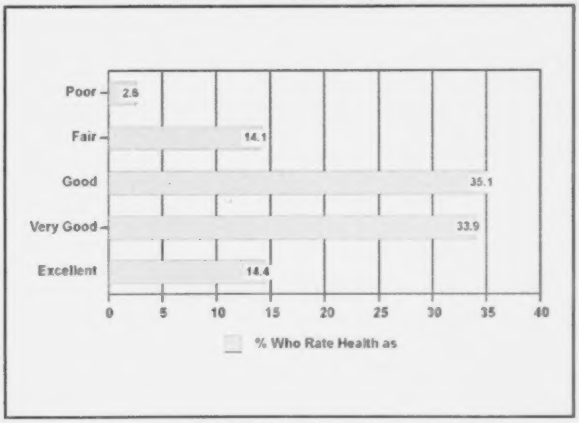


Figure 15
Perceived Physical Health



Over half the Canadian employees in this sample report high levels of perceived stress

Just over half of the respondents to this survey (55%) report high levels of perceived stress. Another 41% are moderately stressed (see Figure 13).

Perceived stress has increased over time

The data suggest that a far higher percentage of Canadians employed by the country's larger employees are highly stressed today than a decade ago (55% vs. 44%). This sharp increase in perceived stress over the past decade (see Figure 14) is cause for concern given the strong positive association between perceived stress and physical and mental health problems and the strong negative association between perceived stress and productivity (see Tangri, 2003 for an excellent review of this research).

Women and employees with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of perceived stress

The data indicate that perceived stress is a function of gender and dependent care status rather than where one works (i.e. sector of employment) or what one does at work (i.e. job type). Despite arguments in the research literature on which types of jobs are associated with the highest levels of stress—low-control blue and pink collar positions or high-demand managerial and professional jobs—there are no job type differences in perceived stress when gender is taken into account. Similarly, when gender is controlled for, there are no sector of employment differences in perceived stress for women.

Who reports the highest levels of perceived stress? Women—especially those with dependent care responsibilities—have the highest levels. Men with dependent care responsibilities and men who work in the public sector report higher levels of perceived stress than other men. Men without dependent care responsibilities, however, are substantially less likely to report high levels of perceived stress (only 44% of the respondents in this group report high perceived stress). Consider the following:

- 59% of women in management and professional positions and 61% of women in "other" positions report high levels of perceived stress versus 47% of male managers and professionals and 49% of men in "other" positions.
- 63% of the women with dependent care responsibilities report high levels of perceived stress versus 56% of women without such responsibilities; 51% of the men with dependent care report high perceived stress versus 44% of men without such responsibilities.

- 51% of the men in the public sector sample report high perceived stress versus 46% of men in the private sector sample and 44% of men in the NFP sector sample.

The gender differences in perceived stress observed in these data are consistent with most other work in this area which shows that women are more likely than men to acknowledge that they feel stressed and have coping problems. The higher levels of perceived stress associated with dependent care status are likely because those with child care and/or elder care responsibilities have more demands and less control over their time and personal lives than their peers without such responsibilities. In other words, parenting and elder care responsibilities can be considered a high-demand, low-control "job"—which has been found to be the type of work that carries the greatest perceived stress (Karasek, 1979).

6.1.2 Depressed Mood

Depressed mood is a state characterized by low energy and persistent feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Duxbury & Higgins, 1998). In 1995, more than 1.5 million Canadians sought treatment for depression (Statistics Canada, 1999). Depression represents the single most common psychological condition seen by the family physician (Quick et al., 1997). Given the persistent, and often irreconcilable, time demands of work and family roles, it is not surprising that work–life conflict has been shown to be a significant contributor to depressed mood.[23]

Over one third of Canadian employees in this sample report high levels of depressed mood

Just over a third of the respondents to this survey (36%) report high levels of depressed mood. Another 42% report moderate levels of depressed mood. Only 22% of this sample report low levels of depressed mood (see Figure 13).

Depressed mood has increased over time

The data (see Figure 14) suggest that a significant proportion of employed Canadians report higher levels of depressed mood today compared to a decade ago. In 1991, 24% of the respondents to our study reported high levels of depressed mood. This increased to 36% experiencing high depressed mood in 2001—an increase of 12 percentage points. These findings are very consistent with those observed with respect to perceived stress and suggest that the mental health of Canadians employed by Canada's larger organizations has deteriorated over time.

Who is more likely to report higher levels of depressed mood?

Within the sample, depressed mood is a function of gender, job type and dependent care status. For men, it is also a function of sector of employment. Who has highest levels of depressed mood? The data in Appendix I indicate that the following groups are at higher risk:

- Women in clerical and administrative positions (45% report high levels of depressed mood).
- Women with dependent care responsibilities (44% report high depressed mood).
- Men who work in blue collar jobs (32%) and men who work in the public sector (32%) report higher levels of depressed mood than the men in the other groups.

Who is less likely to display symptoms associated with higher levels of depressed mood? Men without dependent care responsibilities who work in the private and NFP sectors.

Women are more likely than men to report high levels of depressed mood

No matter how the data are broken down, women are more likely than men to report high levels of depressed mood. When the comparisons are done within sector of employment, women report higher levels of depressed mood than men. Similarly, when dependent care status is taken into account, women are more likely than men to report high levels of depressed mood (i.e. 28% of the men in the sample without dependent care report high levels of depressed mood vs. 39% of women without dependent care; 30% of the men in the sample with dependent care report high levels of depressed mood vs. 44% of the women with dependent care). Finally, when job type is controlled for, women report higher levels of depressed mood than men (i.e. 37% of women in management and professional positions report high levels of depressed mood vs. 27% of men in these positions; 45% of women in "other" positions report high levels of depressed mood vs. 32% of men in these positions). It is interesting to note that in all three sets of analyses, women report depressed mood levels approximately 12 percentage points higher than those reported by men. This is the same magnitude as the gender differences observed with respect to perceived stress and is consistent with the fact that women are more likely than men to acknowledge feelings of stress and depression.

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[23] For a review of this literature, see Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992, 1997; and Tangri, 2003.

Respondents working in "other" positions within the organization are more likely to be depressed

Respondents working in "other" positions within the organization (i.e clerical, administrative, technical, production, operations) report higher levels of depressed mood than those in managerial and professional positions. For example:

- 37% of women in management and professional positions report high levels of depressed mood versus 45% of women in "other" positions.
- 27% of men in management and professional positions report high levels of depressed mood versus 32% of men in "other" positions.

This is a very interesting finding in that it suggests that working in lower quality jobs is harmful to the mental health of employees in these types of positions—regardless of their gender.[24]

Mothers and women caring for elderly relatives are more likely to be depressed

Dependent care status is not associated with the prevalence of depressed mood for men. Women with dependent care responsibilities, however, report higher levels of depressed mood than women without dependent care (44% vs. 39%). Report One found that women were more likely than men to have primary responsibility for child care and elder care responsibilities within their family (though gender differences in the amount of time spent in these roles are not great). The findings with respect to depressed mood suggest that the conditions which characterize dependent care situations (e.g. increased demands and lower levels of control) contribute to poorer mental health for employees with these types of responsibility.

Men in the public sector sample report higher levels of depressed mood than other men

Almost one in three men in the public sector sample reports high levels of depressed mood. This is a higher level of depressed mood than reported by their counterparts in the NFP and private sectors (approximately one in four of the men in these sectors reports higher depressed mood). No such sectoral differences were observed for the women in the sample. Further research is needed to determine the specific factors within the public sector environment that contribute to poorer mental heath for men.

6.1.3 Burnout

Burnout is a newly defined concept in the realm of psychological stress that has recently gained extensive attention as a separate strain. Burnout, as defined in this study, is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion which is often found in those who are involved with people in emotionally demanding situations. Chronic daily stresses rather than unique critical life events are regarded as central factors in producing burnout. At severe levels, burnout overlaps with symptoms of depression. Such situations are prevalent, particularly in the human services professions and also in public sector and managerial positions where clients and employees impose constant demands for attention. Organizations that have a high incidence of burnout within their workforce experience increased employment costs associated with long-term stress and disability leave, absenteeism, prescription drug use and turnover.[25]

Just under one third of the employees in this sample report high levels of burnout

Just under one third (32%) of the respondents to this survey report high levels of burnout. Another 39% report moderate levels of burnout while 29% report low levels of burnout (see Figure 13). The fact that data on burnout were not collected in 1991 prevents us from stating definitively that the percentage of the Canadian workforce at high risk of burnout has increased over time. However, the fact that work demands as well as total demands have increased substantially over time (see Report One) suggests that this may indeed be the case.

Who is at greater risk with respect to burnout?

Burnout is a function of gender and dependent care status rather than sector of employment. It is also a function of job type for women. Who has highest levels of burnout?

- 37% of women in management and professional positions report high burnout; and

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[24] Graham Lowe has done extensive research on the concept of quality of work (see Lowe, 2000). According to Lowe, a high quality job has the following characteristics: work tasks are meaningful and fulfilling to the workers, it offers a decent and secure standard of living, employment relationships are based on mutual trust, employees participate in decision making, healthy and safe work environments are developed through collaborative efforts between employers and workers, it is supportive of work-life balance, and it offers the opportunity to use and further develop skills.

[25] See Tangri, 2003 for a review of relevant literature on burnout.

- 36% of women with dependent care responsibilities report high burnout.

Men with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of burnout than their counterparts in the other samples (30% of the men in this group report high levels of burnout) but are less likely than the women in the sample to experience this phenomenon. Who is at lower risk of burnout? Men without dependent care responsibilities (only 26% of the men in this group report high levels of burnout).

Women in managerial and professional positions are at higher risk for burnout

Burnout is not linked to job type for the men in the sample. Women in managerial and professional positions, however, are more likely than their counterparts in "other" positions to report high levels of burnout. Thirty-seven percent of women in managerial and professional positions report high levels of burnout versus 33% of women in "other" positions.

Men and women with dependent care responsibilities are at higher risk of burnout

When gender is taken into account, employees with dependent care responsibilities are more likely than their counterparts without dependent care to report high levels of burnout. Thirty percent of the men in the sample with dependent care report high levels of burnout versus 26% of men without such responsibilities. Similarly, 36% of the women with dependent care report high levels of burnout versus 32% of women without such responsibilities.

Women are more likely than men to report high levels of burnout

Women report higher levels of burnout than men when job type and dependent care status are controlled for:

- 37% of women in management and professional positions report high levels of burnout versus 29% of men in these positions.
- 33% of women in "other" positions report high burnout versus 28% of men in these positions.
- 32% of women without dependent care report high levels of burnout versus 26% of their male counterparts.
- 36% of the women with dependent care report high levels of burnout versus 30% of the men with such responsibilities.

Higher demands mean greater burnout

Taken as a whole, these data suggest that employees with heavier demands at work and outside of work (i.e. women in managerial and professional positions) are the most likely to burn out. The fact that many men in managerial and professional positions carry lighter loads at home than their female counterparts (little gender difference in workloads for those in the managerial and professional sample) seems to give them some degree of protection against burnout. The same reasoning applies to men and women in "other" positions in the organization. Why do women without dependent care report higher levels of burnout than their male counterparts? The data suggest that this finding can be attributed to the fact that the women in the sample without dependent care responsibilities are more likely than their male counterparts to work in managerial and professional positions. Their higher susceptibility to burnout in this case may be due to greater demands at work.

6.1.4 Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction provides an assessment of an individual's overall sense of well-being (emotional, physical, social). Work–life researchers reason that, because of the interactive and reciprocal nature of the relationships between work and family domains, work-related role stress might combine with work–life demands to exert considerable influence on an employee's overall perception of life satisfaction. Further, it is assumed that improvements in the quality of work–life balance will produce corresponding improvements in the quality of life as it makes it easier for employees to reduce the strains of managing the modern family. Generally, the research has supported these contentions. High work–life conflict has consistently been associated with lower levels of life satisfaction.[26]

Forty-one percent of the Canadian employees in this sample report high levels of life satisfaction

Forty-one percent of the respondents to this survey report high levels of life satisfaction. Another 38% report moderate levels of life satisfaction. One in five (21%) of the employees in this sample indicates dissatisfaction with their lives (see Figure 13).

Life satisfaction has decreased over time

The data suggest that fewer employed Canadians were satisfied with their lives in 2001 compared to a decade ago (see Figure 14). The change, while not as precipitous as observed with perceived stress and depressed mood (a

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[26] For a review of this literature, see Bedeian et al., 1988; Googins, 1991; Aryee, 1992; Rice, Frone & McFarlin, 1992; and Duxbury & Higgins, 1998.

4 percentage point decrease in life satisfaction over the past decade), is still cause for concern due to its societal implications (i.e. changes within Canadian society over the past decade have made it more difficult for people to lead satisfying lives).

Managers and professionals are more likely to be satisfied with their lives

Men and women working in managerial and professional positions are more satisfied with their lives than those in "other" jobs:

- 44% of women in management and professional positions report high levels of life satisfaction versus 38% of women in "other" positions.
- 45% of men in management and professional positions report high levels of life satisfaction versus 37% of men in "other" positions.

These differences are interesting and support research done in the area of high quality jobs (i.e. employees with high quality jobs that provide autonomy, challenging and exciting work and secure economic status are more likely to experience positive spillover between work and life and report higher levels of satisfaction with life). These findings also partially rebut the common idea that "money cannot buy happiness." These data suggest that while this may be true, it sure helps!

Women with dependent care responsibilities are less satisfied with their lives

The findings with respect to life satisfaction are very similar to those observed for depressed mood. Dependent care status is not associated with life satisfaction for men. Women with dependent care responsibilities (38%), however, are less satisfied with their lives than women without such responsibilities (43%). This finding is consistent with the fact that more women in Canada are deciding either not to have children or to limit the number of children they have. It also suggests that the difficulties faced by women with dependent care with respect to balancing career and family demands are reducing the amount of satisfaction they have with their lives.

Men in the public sector sample are less satisfied with their lives

Sector of employment is not associated with life satisfaction for the women in the sample. The men in the public sector sample, however, report lower levels of life satisfaction than their counterparts in the NFP and private sectors. Again, this finding mirrors that observed with respect to depressed mood and supports our call for further research into the working conditions faced by men in this sector.

6.1.5 Perceived Physical Health

To examine the link between work-life conflict and physical health, we asked respondents to assess their level of health. We asked them to describe their usual state of physical health over the last year as compared to other people their age. Response choices included Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good and Excellent.

Half of the respondents rate their health as very good to excellent

As shown in Figure 15, the plurality of respondents to this survey feel that their health is very good or excellent (48%). Almost one in five describes their health as fair or poor.

Managers and professionals are more likely to describe their health as excellent

Respondents working in managerial and professional positions were more likely to describe their health as very good or excellent while those in "other" jobs were more likely to describe their health as fair or poor (50% of managers and professionals describe their health as very good or excellent vs. 45% of those in "other" positions; 19% of those in "other" positions describe their health as fair or poor vs. 15% of those in managerial and professional positions). These findings are consistent with those observed for depressed mood and support the idea that poor quality jobs have a negative impact on employees' physical and mental health.

Perceived physical health is not a function of gender when job type and sector of employment are taken into account

When job type and sector of employment are taken into account, there are no gender differences in perceived physical health. This is very interesting in that it contradicts popular belief and much of the research in this area that women are more likely than men to perceive that they are in poorer health. These data instead support the hypothesis that low-quality, high-demand, low-control positions are associated with poorer perceived physical health, no matter what the gender of the job holder.

Dependent care status has a negative impact on perceived physical health

Both male and female respondents with dependent care responsibilities were less likely than respondents without such responsibilities to perceive their health as being very good or excellent (46% of respondents with dependent care say their health is very good or excellent vs. 52% of those without dependent care). Again, these findings are very consistent with those observed for depressed mood and support the idea that family role responsibilities (which tend to be high-demand, low-control type jobs) impair both physical and mental health.

6.2 The Costs of Imbalance: Impact of Work–Life Conflict on Employees

This section is divided into four subsections. The costs associated with high levels of role overload are addressed first. This is followed by an examination of the costs associated with high levels of work to family interference. The impacts of high family to work interference and caregiver strain are covered in subsections 3 and 4.[27] The methodology used to undertake these comparisons is similar to that outlined in Chapter Four. The data presented in this chapter are provided in Appendix J.

Work–life conflict is strongly associated with physical and mental health problems

Examination of the data in Appendix J indicates that the physical and mental health of Canadian employees declines as the conflict between work and life increases. In fact, all four measures of work–life conflict examined in this phase of the analysis were strongly associated (i.e. differences of 10% or greater) with our measures of mental health (i.e. perceived stress, depressed mood, burnout, life satisfaction) and physical health (i.e. perceived physical health).

6.2.1 What Is the Impact of High Role Overload on the Employee?

Just under 60% of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of role overload. What impact do these high levels of role overload have on key employee outcomes?

Employees with high role overload are 12 times more likely to report high levels of burnout

Examination of the data indicate that employees with high role overload are:

- 12.0 times more likely than those with low role overload to report high levels of burnout;
- 3.5 times more likely than those with low role overload to report high levels of perceived stress;
- 3.4 times more likely than those with low role overload to report high levels of depressed mood; and
- 3.1 times more likely than those with low role overload to report that they were in fair or poor physical health.

In other words, role overload is positively associated with high perceived stress, high burnout and high depressed mood, and negatively associated with life satisfaction and perceived physical health.

Employees with low role overload enjoy better mental health

Respondents with low role overload enjoy the best mental and physical health of any of the respondents in the survey. Only 20% of those with low role overload report high perceived stress, only 4% are burnt out and only 14% report high levels of depressed mood. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents with low role overload indicate that they are very satisfied with their lives. These data suggest that the mental health of employed Canadians would be significantly improved if organizations ensured that work demands were more manageable (e.g. hire more staff, reduce travel demands, put limits on the use of technology to support after-hours work).

6.2.2 What Is the Impact of High Work to Family Interference on the Employee?

Just under 30% of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of work to family interference. What impact does this high level of interference have on key employee outcomes?

Employees with high work to family interference report poorer mental health

Examination of the data indicate that employees with high work to family interference are:

- 5.6 times more likely than those with low levels of work to family interference to report high levels of burnout;
- 2.4 times more likely than those with low levels of work to family interference to report high levels of depressed mood;
- 2.3 times as likely as those with low levels of work to family interference to report that they were in fair or poor physical health;

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[27] Again, it should be noted that for the reasons given in Chapter Four, spillover is not included in this phase of the analysis.

- 2.2 times as likely as those with low levels of work to family interference to report high levels of perceived stress; and
- slightly less than half as likely as those with low levels of work to family interference to report high levels of life satisfaction.

In other words, work to family interference is associated with higher levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood, and lower levels of life satisfaction and perceived physical health.

Three quarters of respondents with high work to family interference report high levels of perceived stress

The respondents with high work to family interference can be considered to be "at risk" with respect to burnout. Just under two thirds (62%) of the respondents with high work to family interference report high levels of burnout while just over three quarters (77%) report high levels of perceived stress.

6.2.3 What Is the Impact of High Family to Work Interference on the Employee?

Approximately 10% of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of family to work interference. What impact do high levels of this form of interference have on employees?

Family to work interference is less problematic for employees than other forms of work–life conflict

Examination of the data indicates that employees with high family to work interference are 1.6 times more likely than those with low family to work interference to report high levels of perceived stress and burnout, 1.7 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood, and 1.6 times less likely to indicate that they are satisfied with their lives. They are also 1.9 times more likely to perceive that they are in fair or poor physical health. In other words, family to work interference is positively associated with high perceived stress, high burnout and high depressed mood, and negatively associated with life satisfaction and perceived physical health. While the association between this form of work–life conflict and the employee outcomes is not as strong as that observed with role overload and work to family interference, it is still cause for concern.

6.2.4 What Is the Impact of High Caregiver Strain on the Employee?

Nine percent of the respondents to the 2001 survey report that they experience caregiver strain several times a week or daily. Another 17% experience such strain weekly. Examination of the data indicates that caregiver strain and family to work interference have very similar impacts on employees. In fact, the magnitude of the association between caregiver strain and the employee outcomes is virtually the same as that observed with respect to family to work interference (i.e. employees with high caregiver strain were 1.5 times more likely than those with low caregiver strain to report high levels of perceived stress, 1.8 times as likely to report high levels of depressed mood, 1.8 times less likely to indicate that they are satisfied with their lives and 1.6 times more likely to report high levels of burnout and to perceive that their physical health is fair or poor).

Employees with high caregiver strain are most likely to be depressed

Respondents with high caregiver strain appear to be at the highest risk with respect to perceived stress (80% with high caregiver strain report high perceived stress), depressed mood (60% with high caregiver strain report high depressed mood) and impaired physical health (28% with high caregiver strain report their health as fair or poor). They are also the least likely to be satisfied with their lives (only 24% report high life satisfaction).

6.3 Summary and Conclusions

How are Canadians who work for the country's larger employers doing? How has their situation changed over time? What is the link between work–life conflict and employee mental health? Between work–life conflict and employee physical health? What impact do gender, job type, dependent care status and sector of employment have on these issues? The data reviewed in this section of the report and summarized in Table 6 were used to answer these questions.

Table 6
Summary of Between Group Differences in Employee Outcomes

	% High	Gender	Job Type	DC	Sector
Perceived Stress	55%	W > M	No job type differences	DC > No DC	No sector differences for W. For M., PS > NFP and Priv.
Depressed Mood	36%	W > M	"Other" > Mgr./Prof.	For W., DC > No DC No dependent care differences for M.	No sector differences for W. For M., PS > NFP and Priv.
Burnout	32%	W > M	For W., Mgr./Prof. > "Other" No job differences for M.	DC > No DC	No sector differences
Life Satisfaction	41%	No gender differences	Mgr./Prof. > "Other"	For W., No DC > DC No dependent care differences for M.	No sector differences for W. For M., NFP and Priv. > PS
Very Good or Excellent Perceived Physical Health	48%	No gender differences	Mgr./Prof. > "Other"	No DC > DC	No sector differences

Key to Table: *W = Women; M = Men; DC = Dependent Care; Mgr. = Manager; Prof. = Professional; NFP = Not-for-Profit; PS = Public Sector; Priv. = Private Sector*

So ... how are Canadian employees doing?

1. *Many Canadians working for Canada's larger employers are in poor mental health (i.e. report high levels of perceived stress, depressed mood and burnout).*

How are Canadian employees doing? The data suggest that many working Canadians are not doing as well as they could be and not as well as they were a decade ago. Over half of the employed Canadians who responded to our survey report high levels of perceived stress; one in three reports high levels of burnout and depressed mood. Only 41% are satisfied with their lives and one in five is dissatisfied. Almost one in five perceives that their physical health is fair or poor. These data are disturbing as they can be considered to be a "best case scenario" because they reflect the mental health status of employed Canadians—many (if not virtually all) of whom can be considered to have a "good" job—in one of the "best countries to live in the world!" This begs the following question: If a substantial number of employed Canadians can be considered to be in poor mental health, what is the prevalence of mental health problems in those groups considered to be at risk with respect to stress, depression and poor physical health (e.g. contingent workers, the unemployed, those on social assistance)?

How has the situation changed over time?

2. *The physical and mental health of Canadian employees has deteriorated over time.*

Overall, the 1990s appears to have been a tough decade for Canadians working for medium and large organizations. Comparison of the 1991 and 2001 samples indicates that the prevalence of high levels of perceived stress and depression in the Canadian labour force has increased in the past decade. In 1991, 44% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of perceived stress; this had increased to 55% with high levels of perceived stress in 2001. In 1991, 24% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of depressed mood compared to 36% in the 2001 sample. This decline in mental health over the past decade is not surprising given the increase in work demands noted in Report One.

Given these findings and the link between mental health and life satisfaction, it is also not surprising to find that the life satisfaction of our respondents (and by extension that of Canadians employed by medium and large organizations) also declined over the decade (45% with high life satisfaction in 1991 vs. 41% in 2001). This decline in life satisfaction is consistent with the rise in perceived stress and depressed mood.

Taken as a whole, these data suggest that the increase in the work demands of Canadian employees, as well as the proliferation of work–life conflict over the decade, are having a negative impact on the mental health of employees.

What is the impact of key contextual variables on employee mental and physical health outcomes?

3. *The mental health (i.e. perceived stress, depressed mood, burnout, life satisfaction) and physical health of employed Canadians is strongly associated with the quality of their job (i.e. job type) and the number of demands they face outside of work (i.e. gender, dependent care status).*

4. *Women report higher levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood than men.*

   The data are unequivocal—women are more likely than men to report high levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood. The fact that these gender differences were observed when job type, dependent care status and sector of employment were taken into account suggests that such differences have more to do with gender differences in socialization than in either work or non-work demands. These findings may, for example, be due to women being more likely to self-examine their emotional feelings and acknowledge problems with respect to their mental health. Alternatively, it may be that women are less able to cope effectively with multiple stressors within their environment. Finally, these gender differences in mental health may exist because women who work for pay outside of the home have added stressors associated with paid employment with little concomitant decrease in the stressors associated with their family roles.

5. *Managers and professionals are in better mental and physical health than employees working in "other" jobs (i.e. clerical, administrative, production) within the organization. They are more likely to be satisfied with their lives, less likely to report high levels of depressed mood and more likely to consider their physical health to be very good or excellent.*

   Managers and professionals can be considered to be in better overall mental health (i.e. less likely to be depressed, more likely to be satisfied with their lives) and physical health (i.e. more likely to describe their health as very good to excellent) than employees who occupy blue and pink collar jobs (i.e. clerical, administrative, production positions). This finding is particularly striking because the managers and professionals in our sample are more likely than the blue and pink collar employees to work long hours, take work home with them and report high role overload, experience high work to family interference, and report negative work to family spillover and high job stress—conditions which are generally a recipe for poorer mental health.

   Taken in concert, these findings suggest that managerial and professional employees are more able than their non-professional counterparts to cope with these higher work demands. These findings are consistent with the literature presented in Report One which suggests that employees in professional positions have a greater perception of control than non-professionals and that it is these higher levels of control that help them cope with heavier work demands. Unfortunately, we still do not know what contributes to this increased sense of control. Possible explanations include better working conditions, more interesting work, higher levels of flexibility, higher job security, increased job mobility (linked to their higher levels of education) and higher socio-economic status (i.e. more formal education, higher incomes). These data also suggest that the physical and mental health issues we observed in the "other" group may be more a function of their work environment, the types of jobs they do and their working conditions rather than the time spent in work itself. This interpretation of the data is consistent with the findings with respect to commitment and job satisfaction reported earlier.

6. *Female managers and professionals are more likely than women in "other" positions to report high levels of burnout. No such difference was observed within the male sample.*

   The data suggest that managerial and professional positions and motherhood are not compatible in that they both impose heavy demands. Women who work in managerial and professional positions are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout than any other group of employees. These higher levels of burnout can be attributed to the fact that this group of women appears to be in a "no win" situation with respect to work and family—they have heavier work demands than other women and heavier family demands than men. Female managers and professionals devote a greater number of hours to work each week, work more unpaid overtime and report higher levels of role overload, job stress, negative work to family spillover and work to family interference than women in "other" positions with no concomitant decline in the responsibilities they assume at home. Similarly, while female managers and professionals are as committed to work as their male colleagues in these positions (i.e. work long hours), they assign more time to their family role demands and have more responsibility for child care and elder care than their male counterparts. In other words, female managers and professionals are more likely than workers in any other group to try to "burn the candle at both ends"—succeed at a high-level job while not sacrificing standards at home. Such a strategy appears to be unsustainable over time.

7. *Employees who have no dependent care responsibilities are in better physical and mental health than employed Canadians who spend time each week in child care and/or elder care. They are less likely to report high levels of perceived stress and burnout and more likely to consider their physical health to be very good or excellent.*

   The data are also unequivocal with respect to the impact of parenthood and/or elder care on employee physical and mental health. The greater the number of non-work demands assumed by an employee, the more likely they are to report that they are stressed, burnt out and that their health is fair or poor. In other words, the job of parent/elder caregiver can be considered to be a high-demand, low-control position—one which we know challenges an individual's ability to cope. Individuals or couples without children or elder care responsibilities can act relatively independently as they do not have the constraints or the demands of caring for children or elderly dependents. The addition of the parent/elder caregiver role complicates an employee's life situation as it places greater demands on them at the same time as it adds constraints. These data suggest that efforts to more proactively manage a more diverse workforce and implement policies and programs to help working mothers and fathers and those with elder care issues have had no appreciable impact on this group of employees.

8. *Motherhood presents more mental health challenges than fatherhood. Women with dependent care responsibilities are less satisfied with their lives than women without these responsibilities.*

   Parenthood appears to have a different impact on the life satisfaction of mothers than fathers. Fatherhood is not associated with life satisfaction for men. Mothers, however, are less satisfied with their lives than women without children. These differences were observed in both the 1991 and 2001 samples (see the CPRN report, Duxbury and Higgins, 2001). Similar findings were observed with respect to depressed mood. Mothers are more likely to report high depressed mood than women without children/elder care. Having either child care or elder care responsibilities was not, however, associated with depressed mood for men.

   These findings support the research literature in the area which suggests that the role of working mother is qualitatively different from the role of working father[28] and that these differences are having a negative impact on the mental health of working mothers. Further research is needed to determine if these differences are due to social, workplace or family factors (or some combination) so that targeted policies can be developed and supports implemented.

   The research literature does, however, give us some indication of where to start our efforts in this area. Virtually all of the literature in this area notes that working mothers assume a disproportionate share of family responsibilities and that even in the new millennium, society judges women's worth by their performance of family roles (i.e. mother, elder caregiver, cook, homemaker) while men's merit is judged by their success as a "breadwinner." As Vanderkolk and Young (1991, p. 45) note:

   > "Even as women's attitudes and needs have changed regarding the world of work, corporate America has by and large been stuck in the '50s with a TV image of "Harriet" keeping the home together while "Ozzie" goes off to the office or the plant. The fact of the matter is that "Harriet" has now taken on both roles."

   These findings are consistent with the research literature which links responsibility for a role with higher perceived stress and reduced satisfaction.[29] This research suggests that, in many cases, fathers fulfill their parental duties by playing with the children (an activity that may increase life satisfaction and protect against depressed mood) while mothers look after more mundane tasks such as feeding and clothing children (activities that are perhaps not as satisfying). These data, therefore, suggest that being responsible for parenting takes some of the joy out of the role. These data can also be explained using the "role expansion" hypothesis noted previously (i.e. the more roles that one can have positive experiences in, the potentially higher level of well-being). These results suggest that motherhood is not as high a "quality" role as fatherhood (i.e. dads do the "fun" family tasks while mothers do the "hard stuff") or that working women are less likely to have positive experiences from parenting than working fathers. More equitable sharing of childrearing within the family may lead to better mental health outcomes for working mothers.

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[28] The following references present arguments or data illustrating the different impacts of motherhood and fatherhood: Hochschild, 1989; Bowen and Pittman, 1995; O'Neil and Greenberger, 1994; Statistics Canada, 2000; Vanier Institute, 2000.

[29] For a review of this research, see Voydanoff, 1995 and Haas, 1995.

9. *Men who work in the public sector report higher levels of perceived stress and depressed mood and lower levels of life satisfaction than their male counterparts in the NFP and private sectors. No such differences were noted in the female sample.*

   Men in the public sector sample appear to be exposed to a fairly unique set of stressors. They are more likely than any other group of men to report high perceived stress and depressed mood and less likely to report that they are satisfied with their lives. Further research is needed to determine what conditions within the public sector work environment are impairing the mental health of these men.

Why should society worry about work-life conflict?

10. *High work-life conflict is associated with declines in employee physical and mental health.*

    The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work-life conflict is associated with a number of indicators of physical and mental health problems at the employee level. Employees who are stressed, depressed and burnt out are not as productive as those in good mental health. Perceived stress, depression and burnout are also linked to increased absenteeism, greater use of prescription medicines and employee assistance programs, and lower levels of creativity, innovation and risk taking, which, in turn, can all be expected to negatively affect an organization's bottom line.

11. *The four components of work-life conflict have differential impacts on the physical and mental health of employees.*

    The data reviewed in this section of the report indicate that the four components of work-life conflict examined in this analysis have different impacts on the physical and mental health of employees. These differences are worthy of note in that they provide quite different motivations for addressing this issue, as well as different prescriptions with respect to change.

12. *Employees with low levels of role overload are in better mental health.*

    Respondents with low role overload appear to be in the best mental and physical health of any of the respondents in the survey. Only 20% of those with low role overload report high perceived stress, only 4% are burnt out and only 14% report high levels of depressed mood. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents with low role overload indicate that they are very satisfied with their lives. These data suggest that the mental health of employed Canadians would be significantly improved if organizations ensured that work demands were more manageable (i.e. hired more staff, reduced travel demands, put limits on the use of technology to support after-hours work).

13. *Employees with high levels of role overload are more likely to report high levels of burnout.*

    Role overload is positively associated with perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood, and negatively associated with life satisfaction and perceived physical health. Examination of the data indicates that employees with high role overload are 12 times more likely than those with low role overload to report high levels of burnout. These findings indicate that the long hours that employers expect from their workforce are not sustainable over time.

14. *Work to family interference is associated with higher levels of perceived stress, depressed mood and burnout.*

    The respondents with high work to family interference can be considered to be "at risk" with respect to burnout and perceived stress (62% of the respondents with high work to family interference report high levels of burnout and 77% report high levels of perceived stress). Employees with high work to family interference are 5.6 times more likely than those with low levels of work to family interference to report high levels of burnout, 2.4 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood and 2.2 times as likely to report high levels of perceived stress. These findings suggest that the strategy of "trying to do it all" and "meeting heavy demands at work at the expense of one's personal life" impairs one's mental health.

15. *Family to work interference is less problematic for employees than other forms of work–life conflict.*

The alternative strategy—putting family ahead of work—does not appear to be as harmful to one's mental health as putting work ahead of family. Employees with high levels of family to work interference are 1.6 times more likely as those with low levels to report high levels of perceived stress and burnout, 1.7 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood and 1.6 times less likely to indicate that they are satisfied with their lives. Those with low levels of family to work interference are 1.9 times more likely to report fair or poor perceived physical health. While the association between this form of work–life conflict and the employee outcomes is not as strong as that observed with respect to role overload and work to family interference, it is still cause for concern.

16. *Employees with high caregiver strain are most likely to be depressed.*

Respondents with high levels of caregiver strain appear to be at the highest risk with respect to perceived stress (80% with high caregiver strain report high perceived stress), depressed mood (60% with high caregiver strain report high depressed mood) and impaired physical health (28% with high caregiver strain report that their health is fair or poor). They are also the least likely to be satisfied with their lives (only 24% of this group report high life satisfaction).

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

- How prevalent are the various forms of work-life conflict in Canada at this time (reference year 2001)?
- Has the prevalence of the various forms of work-life conflict changed over the past decade?
- What is the impact of the various forms of work-life conflict on:
  - Canadian organizations?
  - Canadian families?
  - Canadian employees?
- How does gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status affect these issues?

These research questions were used to structure the main body of the report. Chapter Three explored the prevalence of the various forms of work-life conflict in Canadian firms employing more than 500 people and examined how the prevalence had changed over the past decade. Chapters Four, Five and Six looked at the impact of work-life conflict on the organization (Chapter Four), Canadian families (Chapter Five) and employees (Chapter Six). Material on the effect of the various contextual variables (i.e. gender, job type, dependent care status, sector of employment) was integrated into these four chapters.

In an effort to clarify the material for readers, this final chapter of the report takes a different tack and uses the various forms of work-life conflict (rather than the research questions) as the organizing framework. The chapter is organized into eight sections. The first section (7.1) addresses the above questions with respect to role overload. The next four sections provide similar information with respect to work to family interference (section 7.2), family to work interference (section 7.3), caregiver strain (section 7.4) and work to family spillover (section 7.5). Section 7.6 summarizes key findings with respect to the impact of gender, job type, sector of employment and dependent care status. Other key conclusions from this research which may be of interest to the reader and which help put this research into context are summarized in section 7.7. Key recommendations are offered in section 7.8. The impact of the different forms of work-life conflict on organizations, families and employees has also been summarized in Appendix K.

7.1 Role Overload

Role overload is defined as the perceptual aspect of feeling overwhelmed, overloaded or stressed by the pressures of multiple roles.

How prevalent is high role overload?

High levels of role overload have become systemic within the population of employees working for Canada's larger employers. Examination of the role overload data indicate that the majority of Canadians who work for firms employing 500 or more people (58% of the sample) are currently experiencing high levels of role overload. Another 30% report moderate levels of role overload. Only 12% of the respondents in this sample report low levels of overload.

How has the prevalence of high role overload changed over the past decade?

The percentage of the workforce with high role overload has increased dramatically over the past decade. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents to the 2001 survey report high levels of role overload—an increase of 11 percentage points compared to the 1991 sample. This increase in role overload is consistent with the fact that employees in the 2001 sample spend more time in work-related activities per week and more time in work and family activities than their counterparts in the 1991 sample. Other data from the 2001 survey suggest that much of this increase in role overload can be linked to new information and communications technology (e.g. laptops, email, cell phones), organizational norms that still reward long hours at the office rather than performance and organizational anorexia (downsizing has meant there are too few employees to do the work).

What is the impact of high levels of role overload on Canadian organizations?

The data reviewed in this report demonstrate the serious consequences to the organization of high levels of role overload. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 5.6 times more likely to report high levels of job stress;
- 3.5 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue;
- 2.8 times more likely to miss work due to child care problems;
- 2.3 times more likely to report high intent to turnover; and
- 1.6 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism, all factors considered, and to miss three or more days of work in the past six months due to ill health.

In addition, employees who report low levels of role overload are 1.3 times more likely than those with high role overload to be highly committed to their employer, 1.7 times more likely to say that they rate their employer positively, and twice as likely to report high levels of job satisfaction.

Why are those with high role overload less likely to be satisfied with their jobs? The data indicate that compared to their counterparts with low levels of role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 2.4 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their workloads;
- 1.8 times more likely to be dissatisfied with the number of hours they work;
- 1.6 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their ability to meet their career goals and 1.5 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their opportunities for career development; and
- 1.4 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their work schedule.

In other words, high work demands and onerous work expectations reduce overloaded employees' level of job satisfaction.

Why are those with high role overload more likely to be thinking of leaving the organization? The data indicate that compared to those with low role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 12.5 times more likely to say they would leave because their work expectations are unrealistic;
- 4.7 times more likely to say they would leave because they want more time for their family and/or themselves;
- 3.5 times more likely to say they would leave because they are frustrated with their work environment;
- 3.6 times more likely to say they would leave because their work environment is non-supportive;
- 3.0 times more likely to say they would leave because their values are not the same as their organization; and
- 2.6 times more likely to say they would leave because they perceive that they are not recognized for their efforts.

In other words, overloaded employees are more likely to say they would leave to escape unrealistic workload and frustrations at work and to gain more balance and time. When taken in concert, these data suggest that role overload may negatively affect an organization's ability to recruit, retain and motivate highly qualified employees—factors which will all show up on their bottom line.

Absence from work is also strongly linked to role overload. Employees with high role overload missed 8.8 days of work per year while those with low role overload missed only 5.7 days. In this report, the direct costs of absenteeism due to high role overload was calculated to be approximately $3 billion per year. Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism due to role overload were estimated to be between $4.5 (conservative estimate) and $6 billion per year. Other calculations indicate that employers could reduce absenteeism in their organization by 24% if they eliminated high levels of role overload.

These findings suggest that the downsizing strategies followed by many employers throughout the 1980s and 1990s and the concomitant increase in employee workloads (see Report One) have backfired. The data reviewed in this study indicate that the savings in payroll costs (i.e. salary and benefit dollars) obtained through downsizing may be offset by substantial increases in dollars lost due to higher absenteeism for the "survivors." Employers who consistently overload their employees pay a price, whether they recognize this or not; the costs associated with this strategy are substantial and affect their bottom line. These costs include:

- $3 to $6 billion per year in absenteeism costs alone;
- difficulties recruiting and retaining employees; and
- costs associated with poorer physical and mental health (i.e. greater absenteeism, higher prescription drug costs, greater employee assistance program use).

Work-life balance is not only a moral issue—it is a business issue and needs to be addressed as such.

What is the impact of high levels of role overload on Canadian families?

Taken as a whole, the data from this study indicate that employees with high levels of role overload are less satisfied with their family life and their ability to parent, less likely to feel that their families are well (i.e. report lower family adaptation), less likely to feel that their families are stable and work together and more likely to be concerned about the well-being of their family. Employees with low role overload are 1.4 times more likely than their counterparts with high role overload to report high levels of family life and parental satisfaction and family integration and twice as likely to perceive high levels of family adaptation. This suggests that people who are rushed and exhausted (largely due to their heavier work demands) do not have the time to enjoy their family lives or engage in activities to enhance their family experiences.

What is the impact of high levels of role overload on Canadian employees?

Examination of the data indicate that when compared to their counterparts with low role overload, employees with high role overload are:

- 12.0 times more likely to report high levels of burnout;
- 3.5 times more likely to report high levels of perceived stress;
- 3.4 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood; and
- 3.1 times more likely to report that they are in fair or poor physical health.

In other words, role overload is positively associated with high stress, high burnout and high depressed mood, and negatively associated with life satisfaction and perceived physical health.

Respondents with low role overload enjoy the best mental and physical health of any of the respondents in the survey. Only 20% of those with low role overload report high perceived stress, only 4% are burnt out while only 14% report high levels of depressed mood. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents with low role overload indicate that they are very satisfied with their lives. These data suggest that the mental health of employed Canadians would be significantly improved if organizations ensured that work demands were more manageable (e.g. hired more staff, reduced travel demands, put limits on the use of technology to support after-hours work). The findings with respect to burnout also indicate that the long hours that employers are expecting from their workforce are not sustainable over time.

Who reports the highest levels of role overload?

Who is at the highest risk for role overload? The answer is quite simple—employees with heavier work and/or family demands. Women, employees with dependent care (regardless of their gender), those holding managerial and professional jobs and those working in the NFP sector report the highest levels of role overload.

7.2 Work to Family Interference

This form of work-life conflict arises because employees cannot be in two different places doing two quite different things at exactly the same time. People who experience this type of work-life conflict meet work demands at the expense of the family.

How prevalent is high work to family interference?

While the distribution of role overload in our sample is positively skewed, that of work to family interference is more normally distributed. A plurality of the working Canadians in our sample (38%) report moderate levels of work to family interference. While just over one in four of the respondents (28%) report high work to family interference (i.e. perceive that the demands they face at work make it very difficult to satisfy their non-work responsibilities), 35% are currently experiencing little work to family interference.

How has the prevalence of high work to family interference changed over the past decade?

The data suggest that the percentage of Canadians with high work to family interference has remained fairly constant over the decade. While in some senses this is a positive finding (this form of interference has not increased), in others it is cause for concern as it indicates that little has been done to address this issue.

What is the impact of high levels of work to family interference on Canadian organizations?

Work to family interference is a major problem for many Canadian companies. Consider the following data. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of work to family interference, employees with high work to family interference are:

- 6.0 times more likely to report high levels of job stress;
- 2.8 times more likely to report high intent to turnover;
- 1.9 times more likely to have high absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue;
- 1.3 times more likely to have high levels of absenteeism from work, all factors considered, and to miss three or more days of work in the past six months due to ill health;
- about a third as likely to report high levels of job satisfaction; and
- about half as likely to have a positive view of their employer.

In addition, employees who report low levels of work to family interference are 1.4 times as likely as those with high work to family interference to be highly committed to their employer.

The magnitude of the problem can be appreciated from the following data. Respondents with high levels of work to family interference report the lowest levels of commitment (44% with high commitment), the lowest levels of job satisfaction (only 24% are highly satisfied with their jobs), the highest levels of job stress (66% report high job stress), and the highest intent to turnover (44% think of leaving weekly or more, 24% think of leaving several times a week or on a daily basis) of any of the respondents in the study. Organizational commitment, intent to turnover and view of the employer have all been found to be strongly associated with recruitment and retention issues.

As noted previously, employees with high levels of work to family interference report the lowest levels of job satisfaction in this study. Why are those with high work to family interference less likely to be satisfied with their jobs? The data indicate that compared to their counterparts with low levels of work to family interference, employees with high work to family interference are approximately:

- 3.0 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their workloads;
- 2.7 times more likely to be dissatisfied with the number of hours they work;
- 1.9 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their work schedule;
- 1.6 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their ability to meet their career goals; and
- 1.7 times more likely to be dissatisfied with their career development.

In other words, high work demands, onerous work expectations and an inability to focus on career development activities reduce the satisfaction with their jobs for employees with high levels of work to family interference.

The data also indicate that employees with high work to family interference are also the most likely to be thinking of leaving the organization. Examination of the data indicates that employees would leave the organization to escape the conditions that are contributing to high interference. Compared to those with low work to family interference, employees with high work to family interference are:

- 6.7 times more likely to say they would leave because they wanted more time for their family and/or themselves;
- 6.6 times more likely to say they would leave because their work expectations are unrealistic;
- 4.1 times more likely to say they would leave because their work environment is non-supportive;
- 3.3 times more likely to say they would leave because their values are not the same as their organization;
- 2.8 times more likely to say they would leave because their work environment is frustrating;
- 2.6 times more likely to say they would leave because they perceive that they are not recognized for their efforts; and
- 2.4 times more likely to say they would leave because of personality conflicts at work.

In other words, employees with high levels of work to family interference are more likely to say they would leave to escape unrealistic workload and frustrations at work and to gain more balance and time. When taken in concert, these data suggest that work to family interference may negatively affect an organization's ability to recruit, retain and motivate highly qualified employees—factors which will all show up on their bottom line.

These data indicate that work to family interference affects how people feel about their employer. Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that employees who perceive that they have to put work ahead of family (e.g. feel that they have to make a choice between career advancement and family or between job security and family) do not feel the same way about their employer as employees who do not perceive that such a choice is necessary—they are less committed to the organization and more likely to be thinking of leaving their organization.

While work to family interference is also associated with total absenteeism and absence due to mental or emotional fatigue, the association is not as strong as that observed with respect to role overload. Nevertheless, the data reviewed in this report indicate that employers could reduce absenteeism in their organizations by 6.5% if they eliminated high levels of work to family interference—a savings of almost $1 billion per year in direct costs alone (savings of $1.5 to $2 billion if one also includes the indirect costs of absenteeism due to this form of work–life conflict).

What is the impact of high levels of work to family interference on Canadian families?

Work to family interference is negatively associated with all of the family outcomes examined in this study. Compared to their counterparts with high work to family interference, those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict are:

- 3.0 times as likely to frequently engage in activities associated with high levels of family integration;
- 2.2 times as likely to live in families with high levels of well-being (i.e. are able to adapt to the stresses in their lives);
- 1.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their family life; and
- 1.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their parental abilities.

These findings indicate that employees who put work ahead of family can expect to experience serious repercussions in the family. Such employees are less satisfied with their family lives and their abilities as a parent, less pleased with their family's well-being, and less likely to live in a stable family unit. It is interesting to note that the relationship between family integration and work to family interference is particularly strong (only 12% of employees with high levels of work to family interference can find/make the time to engage in meaningful activities with their families).

What is the impact of high levels of work to family interference on Canadian employees?

The data reviewed in this study can serve as a warning to employees that the strategy of "trying to do it all" and "meeting heavy demands at work at the expense of one's personal life" are associated with impaired mental and physical health. Compared to their counterparts with low work to family interference, employees with high work to family interference are:

- 5.6 times more likely to report high levels of burnout;
- 2.4 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood;
- 2.3 times as likely to report that they are in fair or poor physical health;
- 2.2 times as likely to report high levels of perceived stress; and
- slightly less than half as likely to report high levels of life satisfaction.

Who reports the highest levels of work to family interference?

Who is at the highest risk for work to family interference? The data indicate that employees with heavier work and/or family demands and lower levels of control (i.e. inflexible work arrangements), such as managers and professionals, employees with dependent care responsibilities and those working in the NFP sector, are at higher risk of experiencing this form of work–life conflict.

7.3 Family to Work Interference

This form of work–life conflict also arises because employees cannot be in two different places doing two quite different things at exactly the same time. This type of conflict reflects a different set of priorities, however, as employees who experience this form of interference meet family demands at the expense of work demands, not vice versa.

How prevalent is high family to work interference?

Family to work interference has a very different distribution than observed with role overload and work to family interference. While role overload is positively skewed and work to family interference has a normal distribution, very few working Canadians (approximately 10% of the sample) allow their family demands to interfere with the fulfillment of responsibilities at work. This is one-third the number who give priority to work at the expense of their family. The majority of the sample (58%) report that their family demands do not interfere with their work at all (i.e. low levels of interference). The rest of the respondents (32% of the sample) report moderate levels of interference.

How has the prevalence of high family to work interference changed over the past decade?

The percentage of working Canadians who give priority to family rather than work has increased substantially over the past decade. In 1991, only 5% of the working Canadians who responded to our survey reported high levels of family to work interference. In 2001, the percentage of the sample with high levels of this form of interference had increased to 10% (i.e. doubled). Analysis of the data suggests that much of this increase can be attributed to an increased need to care for elderly dependents.

What is the impact of high levels of family to work interference on Canadian organizations?

Family to work interference has minimal impact on the organizational attitudes examined in this study. While family to work interference is negatively associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction and one's view of one's organization and positively associated with job stress and intent to turnover, the relationships are significantly less than observed with role overload and work to family interference (i.e. statistically significant, but not substantive).

This form of work–life conflict is, however, strongly associated with high levels of absenteeism (i.e. three or more days absence in the past six months). Compared to their counterparts with low levels of family to work interference, employees with high levels of this form of work–life conflict are:

- 7.0 times more likely to report high absence due to child care problems;
- 3.0 times more likely to report high absence, all causes combined;
- 1.8 times more likely to report high absence due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue; and
- 1.5 times more likely to report high absence due to ill health.

From the organization's perspective then, the main consequence of high family to work interference is higher absenteeism due to child care problems. This finding is not surprising given that employees with high levels of this form of conflict put family first (i.e. place a higher priority on caring for children than attending work or cannot attend work due to demands at home).

The link between family to work interference and absenteeism can be better appreciated by examining the costs of this form of work–life conflict to Canadian organizations. While only one in ten of the respondents to this survey reports high levels of family to work interference, the absenteeism associated with this form of work–life conflict is estimated to be just under $0.5 billion a year in direct costs (approximately $1 billion per year when indirect costs are also included in the total). These findings indicate that the organization can reduce costs associated with absenteeism by making it easier for employees with dependent care responsibilities to vary when and where they work.

What is the impact of high levels of family to work interference on Canadian families?

High levels of family to work interference are negatively associated with three of the family outcomes examined in this study. Compared to their counterparts with high family to work interference, those with low levels of this form of work–life conflict are:

- 1.4 times as likely to live in families with high levels of well-being (i.e. adaptation);
- 1.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their family life; and
- 1.4 times as likely to be satisfied with their parental abilities.

In other words, employees who put family ahead of work are less satisfied with both their families and their abilities as a parent. They are also less likely to be happy with their family's well-being. It is interesting to note that the respondents with high family to work interference report the lowest levels of family life satisfaction, parental satisfaction and family well-being in the study. It is hard to tell the direction of causality here. Is it because they are dissatisfied with these dimensions of their life that they have decided to put family first (i.e. trying to remedy the situation)? Alternatively, has the fact that they have met family demands at the expense of their work (and possibly career progression) made them more dissatisfied, critical or resentful of circumstances at home that have made such choices/sacrifices necessary? Additional research is needed in this area to answer this question.

What is the impact of high levels of family to work interference on Canadian employees?

The strategy of putting family ahead of work does not appear to be as harmful to one's mental health as the alternatives—trying to do it all (i.e. role overload) or putting work ahead of family. Compared to their counterparts with low family to work interference, employees with high family to work interference are approximately:

- 1.6 times more likely to report high levels of perceived stress and burnout;
- 1.7 times more likely to report high levels of depressed mood;
- 1.6 times less likely to indicate that they are satisfied with their lives; and
- 1.9 times more likely to perceive that their physical health is fair or poor.

While the association between this form of work-life conflict and the employee outcomes is not as strong as that observed with role overload and work to family interference, it is still cause for concern.

Who reports the highest levels of family to work interference?

There is only one "at risk" group for this form of work-life conflict—employees with child care and elder care. Even in this higher risk group, however, the prevalence of this form of work-life conflict is low (i.e. only 13% of the women and 10% of the men with dependent care responsibilities report high family to work interference). These findings may be useful in dispelling the stereotype that female employees with children or elder care responsibilities give their work responsibilities a lower priority.

7.4 Caregiver Strain

Caregiver strain is defined as a perceptual aspect of feeling overwhelmed, overloaded or stressed by the pressures associated with the role of employed elder caregiver.

How prevalent is high caregiver strain?

Approximately one in four working Canadians experiences what can be considered to be high levels of caregiver strain (9% find elder care to be physically, financially and mentally stressful several times a week or more while 17% experience such stress approximately once a week). Three quarters of the respondents to this survey, however, rarely experience caregiver strain.

How has the prevalence of high caregiver strain changed over the past decade?

As caregiver strain was not included in our 1991 study, we cannot say if the prevalence of this form of work-life conflict has increased over time. The fact that both family to work interference and the proportion of Canadians with elder care responsibilities have increased over the past decade suggest, however, that high caregiver strain has also become more common. We can also expect that this form of work-life conflict will increase dramatically over the next several decades as more employees become "at risk" (the aging of the Canadian population means that more employees will take on elder care responsibilities).

What is the impact of high levels of caregiver strain on Canadian organizations?

From the organization's perspective, the main consequence of high caregiver strain is higher absenteeism due to elder care problems and emotional, physical and mental fatigue. While caregiver strain is positively associated with job stress and intent to turnover, and negatively associated with job satisfaction, the associations are weaker than observed with role overload and work to family interference. Caregiver strain is, however, strongly associated with higher absenteeism due to elder care problems and emotional, physical and mental fatigue. Compared to their counterparts with low levels of caregiver strain, employees with high caregiver strain are:

- 13.0 times more likely to report high absence due to elder care problems; and
- 1.8 times more likely to report high absence due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue.

Analysis done for this report indicates that absenteeism would be 8.6% lower if we could eliminate high levels of this form of work–life conflict. Further analysis indicates that the direct costs of absenteeism due to high levels of caregiver strain are just over $1 billion per year (indirect costs are estimated at another $1 to $2 billion). These costs can be expected to increase in the future as the proportion of the workforce with elder care responsibilities increases.

These findings suggest that the aging of the Canadian workforce and the greater need to provide elder care are overwhelming employees' abilities to cope with both work and family demands. The lack of social and governmental supports for elder care as well as inflexible work schedules mean that employees with elder care commitments often have no choice but to miss work and/or take an unpaid leave of absence. If nothing is done to alleviate the demands placed on these workers, absenteeism due to this form of work–life conflict is likely to increase dramatically in the next decade as more baby boomers assume responsibility for the care of their parents. These findings indicate that employers should stop thinking of flexible work arrangements and family-friendly benefits as something they are doing to accommodate employees. Rather, they should be viewed as strategic measures which have been implemented to help them remain competitive and reduce operating costs.

What is the impact of high levels of caregiver strain on Canadian families?

High caregiver strain affects family life satisfaction and family well-being. Compared to their counterparts with high caregiver strain, those with low caregiver strain are:

- 1.3 times more likely to report high levels of family well-being; and
- 1.3 times more likely to be satisfied with their family life.

While the effect is not substantive, respondents with low caregiver strain are more likely than those with high caregiver strain to engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting. This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that about one in three of the respondents in the high caregiver strain group is in the "sandwich group." It would appear that in these families the time and energy devoted to elder care activities is interfering with the time available for children.

What is the impact of high levels of caregiver strain on Canadian employees?

Caregiving responsibilities place employed Canadians at a higher risk with respect to physical and mental health problems. Respondents in this study with high caregiver strain report the highest levels of perceived stress (80% with high caregiver strain report high stress) and depressed mood (60% with high caregiver strain report high depressed mood) of any group in the sample. They are also more likely to suffer from impaired physical health (28% with high caregiver strain report their health as fair or poor). It would appear that strains of caring for elderly dependents while employed are exceeding Canadians' ability to cope.

Who reports the highest levels of caregiver strain?

Women are clearly more susceptible to this form of work–life conflict than men—and women with dependent care responsibilities who work in "other" positions are particularly at risk. The etiology behind the high caregiver strain is, however, somewhat different for the various groups at risk. For women, it appears to be the higher levels of responsibility and the greater physical strain that are problematic. For those in "other" positions, though, it is the fact that they have fewer financial resources to cope with the problem that appears to increase their susceptibility to this form of work–life conflict.

7.5 Work to Family Spillover

This measure of work–life conflict is somewhat different from the others examined in this analysis in that it does not assume, a priori, that work will have a negative impact on family. Rather, it allows for three quite different views of the relationship between work and family:

- they are separate (i.e. compartmentalized—work does not affect family);
- work has a negative impact on family (i.e. negative spillover); and
- work has a positive impact on family (positive spillover).

We used the data collected using this scale to increase our understanding of the relationship between work and family. We did not look at how this form of work–life conflict affected organizations, families and employees. Nor were we able to do a comparison over time as this measure was not included in the 1991 survey.

How prevalent are the different forms of work to family spillover?

Positive work to family spillover appears to be a rare phenomenon in Canada. Only 9% of the Canadians who responded to this survey report positive spillover (i.e. perceive that their experiences at work have a positive impact on their family life). In contrast, 44% of those Canadians working for larger firms who filled out this survey report negative spillover (i.e. perceive that work is having a negative impact on their family life) while 47% are able to compartmentalize (i.e. feel that work and family are quite separate domains and that work does not affect their family life to any appreciable degree).

Who reports higher levels of negative role spillover?

What can we say about the causes of negative spillover from the data reviewed in this study? It would appear that higher demands (in either work or family domains) and/or lower levels of control (i.e. inflexible work arrangements, lower incomes) seem to predispose an employee to negative spillover. Employees with heavier demands (i.e. women, managers and professionals, employees with child care and/or elder care, and employees in the NFP sector) were more likely to report that work had a negative impact on the amount of time they have to spend on their family roles and relationships at home (i.e. report negative spillover). Employees with fewer demands either at work (i.e. those in "other" jobs) and/or at home (those without dependent care, men) were more likely to report that work and family were separate domains (i.e. compartmentalized).

7.6 Impact of Gender, Job Type, Sector of Employment and Dependent Care

This research initiative has culminated in the collection of a large, rich, comprehensive data set with which to examine work-life conflict. One of the strengths of this research is the capacity this large data set provides to examine how key factors, such as the gender of the employee, the type of job the employee holds, the sector in which the employee works and the dependent care responsibilities he or she assumes, affect work and family demands. Key differences associated with these variables are summarized in Tables 1 and 4 through 6 which are located in the main body of the report. Highlights are noted below.

Impact of gender

What impact does gender have on work-life conflict? To answer this question, one needs to identify gender differences that hold across job type and sector of employment and are true for those with and without dependent care responsibilities. What conclusions can we draw with respect to gender differences in work-life conflict from the data collected in this study?

First, and perhaps most importantly, when job type is taken into account and when work-life conflict is broken into its component parts, many of the gender differences in work-life conflict referred to in the research literature disappear. This suggests that many of the commonly observed gender differences in work-life conflict may be attributed to the fact that women are typically compressed into a different set of jobs than men. In other words, it is work environment and work demands that contribute to women's work-life conflict rather than some inherent characteristic of women that makes them more vulnerable to this form of stress.

That being said, it is important to note that women report higher levels of role overload than men even when sector of employment, dependent care status and job type are controlled for. This suggests that the gender difference in role overload can be partly attributed to the fact that society expects different things from women than from men. Additional support for this interpretation of the data can be found in Report One, where it was noted that women are more likely than men to have primary responsibility for child care and home chores. Women also spend more time per week than men in non-work activities such as child care, elder care and home chores than men. In other words, the gender difference in role overload appears to be due to the fact that working women perform what Hochschild (1989) refers to as a "second shift." These gender differences in role overload will persist until societal expectations change.

Women are also more likely to report high levels of caregiver strain than men when job type, dependent care status and sector of employment are taken into account. This gender difference can be largely explained by the fact that women are more likely than men to find elder care mentally "overwhelming" and physically strenuous. This set of findings suggests that the gender differences in role overload noted previously may be partly because women are more likely to take on the responsibility for the care of elderly dependents. Additional support for this interpretation of the data can be found in Report One, where it was noted that women are more likely than men to have primary responsibility for elder care and to spend more time per week in elder care.

There are no gender differences in work to family and family to work interference when sector of employment, dependent care status and job type are taken into account. Rather, work to family interference is more a function of work (i.e. work demands, work environment, work schedules) while family to work interference is a function of the demands an employee faces within the family domain. Employees with more demands outside of work are, regardless of their gender, more likely to report that their family responsibilities interfere with their ability to meet obligations at work. Similarly, employees with greater work demands are, regardless of their gender, more likely to experience work to family interference.

Impact of job type

What impact does job type have on work–life conflict? While the conclusions one draws with respect to the link between job type and work–life conflict depend very much on the measure of work–life conflict being used, most of the findings from this study support the idea that managers and professionals experience more difficulties balancing work and family demands than those in clerical, administrative, technical and production (i.e. "other") positions. When gender, dependent care status and sector of employment are all controlled for, managers and professionals were more likely than those in "other" jobs to experience high levels of role overload, work to family interference and negative work to family spillover. The differences in role overload can be attributed to the fact that managers and professionals have higher work demands and spend substantially more time (paid and unpaid) each week in work-related activities than those in "other" positions (see Report One). Similarly, the job type difference in work to family interference and negative spillover are consistent with the fact that people who work in managerial and professional positions are more likely than those in "other" positions to engage in work-related activities, which make it harder to attend to events outside of work (i.e. work longer hours, are more likely to take work home to complete in the evening, more likely to have to travel for work and spend week nights and weekend nights away from home, more likely to be personally invested in their work). These job differences may also be due to any or all of the following factors: work expectations and job quality typically increase with level within the hierarchy; managerial and professional positions are usually more intrinsically satisfying; managers and professionals are frequently more personally invested in their jobs and more likely to enjoy their work (i.e. choose to spend more time working); and career advancement is often strongly associated with giving priority to work over family. Taken in concert, these findings support our contention that the time, commitment and energy required by managerial and professional jobs take away from the time and energy available for family roles and relationships outside of work.

Respondents working in "other" positions within the organization report higher levels of one form of work–life conflict—caregiver strain. This job type difference in caregiver strain can be largely explained by the fact that those in "other" positions were more likely than their counterparts in managerial and professional jobs to find elder care a financial strain (no job type differences with respect to the tendency to find elder care overwhelming or a physical strain). This finding, which is consistent with the fact that employees working in managerial and professional positions earn substantially more money than those who work in "other" jobs (Report One), is important in that it suggests that higher levels of income can partially offset caregiver strain by allowing employees to pay for some forms of support.

Impact of gender and job type

The prevalence of one dimension of work–life conflict—negative work to family spillover—is dependent on both gender and job type. Within the manager and professional sample, women report substantially higher levels of negative work to family spillover than men (i.e. 54% of the female managers and professionals in the sample report negative spillover vs. 46% of the male managers and professionals). No such gender difference was observed in the "other" sample. This gender difference in negative spillover within the managerial and professional sample is interesting and can be explained by the fact that female managers and professionals devote as much time to their work role as their male counterparts, but also assume more responsibilities at home. Higher levels of negative work to family spillover appear to be the consequence of this double set of responsibilities. There appears to be a more gendered division of labour for those in "other" jobs, with men in these positions spending more time in paid employment than their female counterparts and women spending more time in child care, elder care and home chores (see Report One).

Impact of sector of employment

What impact does sector of employment have on the prevalence of work–life conflict? Sector of employment was associated with three out of five of the measures of work–life conflict. Respondents working in the NFP sector were more likely than their counterparts in the public sector and private sector samples to report high role overload, high work to family interference and high negative spillover. The elevated levels of work–life conflict in this sector can be attributed to higher work demands (respondents in this sector spend more hours per week in employment-related activities and are more likely to have to spend week nights and weekend nights away from home on job-related travel), how work is arranged (the greater reliance on shift schedules in this sector (e.g. nurses and doctors)) and the higher use of fixed work schedules (e.g. teachers) which make it more difficult for employees to be with their families and disrupt "family rhythm."

Impact of dependent care

What impact does having responsibility for the care of dependents have on work–life conflict? The evidence from this study is quite clear—employed Canadians with dependent care responsibilities have more problems balancing work and family, regardless of how this construct is measured. Employees with dependent care responsibilities report higher levels of role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference and caregiver strain, and are more likely to report negative spillover. None of the other factors examined in this study was associated with all five dimensions of work–life conflict.

The higher levels of role overload reported by parents and those with elder care are not surprising because this set of employees has more roles to perform and devotes more hours per week to work and family activities than their counterparts without such responsibilities. These findings support the literature which links work–life conflict with the assumption of multiple roles.

The data reviewed in this study also show that having dependent care responsibilities increases work to family interference for both men and women. Intuitively, these results make sense as employees with children and/or elderly dependents are more likely to have inflexible commitments at home that will conflict with expectations or demands at work.

The strong associations between dependent care and high levels of family to work interference and caregiver strain are not surprising. What these associations likely reflect is the fact that employed parents/elder caregivers can be considered to be in positions with high demands and low control. In other words, they have a greater number of non-work demands and fewer degrees of freedom with which to deal with unanticipated issues in either domain (e.g. less control over their time, less control over their family domain).

7.7 Other Key Findings from the Research

To satisfy the main objectives of this research, we collected data on a number of key attitudes and outcomes related to organizations, employees and families. These data, while not the main foci of this particular report, add to our understanding of workplace wellness within Canada's larger firms and the health of Canadian employees and their families. While these findings were noted earlier in the report, they are reiterated here to give weight to our recommendations.

The majority of Canada's larger employers cannot be considered to be best practice employers

The data reviewed in this report paint a disturbing picture for Canada's larger employers. Only about half of the employees who participated in this study were highly committed to their employer, satisfied with their job and rated their organization as "an above average place to work." One in three reports high levels of job stress and one in four thinks of leaving their current organization once a week or more. Absenteeism (especially absenteeism due to physical and mental health issues) also appears to be a substantive problem for Canadian employers, with half of the respondents reporting high levels of absenteeism (defined as three or more days of absence in the six months prior to the study being conducted). One in four respondents misses three or more days of work in a six-month period due to ill health, while one in ten reports high absenteeism due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue.

Conditions within Canadian organizations have declined over time

High job stress and absenteeism due to ill health have become more problematic over the past decade. Three times as many respondents report high job stress in 2001 than in 1991 (one in three of the respondents in the 2001 sample experiences high job stress vs. 13% in the 1991 survey). More than half (56%) of those in the 1991 sample did not miss work due to ill health in the six months prior to the study being conducted, while just under one in four (24%) missed three or more days. In 2001, the number of respondents missing three or more days of work due to ill health had increased to 28% of the sample, while the percentage reporting zero days' absence due to ill health had declined to 46%.

During the same time period, job satisfaction and organizational commitment have also appeared to decline. Whereas almost two thirds of employees in 1991 were highly satisfied with their jobs (62%) and committed to their organization (66%), approximately half report high satisfaction (46%) or high organizational commitment (53%) in 2001. Such findings are not surprising given the fact that workloads (see Report One) and work–life conflict also increased over the same time period.

Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that many of the management practices instituted by Canada's larger organizations over the past decade (e.g. downsizing, re-engineering, focus on hours not output, pay freezes, restructuring) have had a negative impact on how Canadian employees perceive their job and their employer. Such workplace conditions diminish Canada's ability to compete globally and will make it harder for Canadian organizations to recruit and retain the "best and the brightest" as the labour market tightens.

Managers and professionals are more likely to report positive organizational outcomes

An employee's view of both their organization and their job, as well as the amount of job stress they experience and their intent to turnover, can be linked to the type of work being done and the work environment (i.e. job type, sector of employment) rather than gender or dependent care status. In other words, it is what you do within the work setting and how you are treated at work, rather than responsibilities outside, that influence key organizational outcomes. Taken as a whole, the data indicate that managers and professionals are more committed to their organizations and satisfied with their jobs than their non-professional counterparts, despite their jobs being associated with higher levels of perceived stress. The data also indicate that employees in the private sector feel more positively about their employer and their jobs than their counterparts in the public and NFP sectors.

Many Canadian employees live in families that cannot be considered "healthy"

The data reviewed in this report paint a mixed picture with respect to the "health" of the families in which Canadian employees live. On a positive note, most respondents are satisfied with their families and their performance as parents and engage in behaviours associated with positive parenting several times a week or more. On a more cautionary note, only 38% of respondents are completely satisfied with their family's well-being and only one in four frequently engages in activities which have been linked to family stability.

Family outcomes decline as family responsibilities increase

Only one contextual factor was substantively associated with the family outcomes included in this study—dependent care status. Respondents who spent time each week in child and/or elder care were less likely than those without such responsibilities to be satisfied with their family or their abilities as a parent. They were also less likely to agree that their families demonstrate high levels of well-being. They were, however, more likely to spend time engaging in those behaviours associated with being a good parent. In other words, family well-being and stability decline as family responsibilities increase.

Many Canadians working for Canada's larger employers are in poor mental health

How are Canadian employees doing? The data suggest that many working Canadians are not doing as well as they could be and not as well as they were a decade ago. Over half of the employed Canadians who responded to our survey report high levels of perceived stress; one in three reports high levels of burnout and depressed mood. Only 41% are satisfied with their lives, and one in five is dissatisfied. Almost one in five perceives that their physical health is fair or poor. These data are disturbing, to say the least, as perceived stress, burnout and depression have been linked to increased expenditures on health, impaired family functioning and reduced organizational productivity.

The physical and mental health of Canadian employees has deteriorated over time

Overall, the 1990s appear to have been a tough decade for Canadians working for Canada's larger organizations. Comparisons of the 1991 and 2001 samples indicate that the prevalence of high levels of perceived stress and depression increased in the Canadian labour force in the past decade. In 1991, 44% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of perceived stress; this increased to 55% in 2001. In 1991, 24% of the respondents to our survey reported high levels of depressed mood compared to 36% in the 2001 sample. This decline in mental health over the past decade is not surprising given the increase in work demands noted in Report One.

Given these findings and the link between mental health and life satisfaction, it is not surprising to find that the life satisfaction of our respondents (and by extension that of Canadians employed by medium and large organizations) also declined over the decade (45% with high life satisfaction in 1991 vs. 41% in 2001). This decline in life satisfaction is consistent with the rise in perceived stress and depressed mood. Taken as a whole, these data suggest that the increase in the work demands of Canadian employees, as well as the proliferation of work–life conflict over the decade, are having an impact on the mental health of employees.

Women report higher levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood than men

The data are unequivocal—women are more likely than men to report high levels of perceived stress, burnout and depressed mood. The fact that these gender differences in perceived stress, depressed mood and burnout were observed when job type, dependent care status and sector of employment were taken into account suggests that such differences have more to do with gender differences in socialization than in work or non-work demands. These findings may, for example, be because women are more likely to self-examine their emotional feelings and acknowledge problems with respect to their mental health. Alternatively, it may be that women are less able to cope effectively with multiple stressors within their environments. Finally, these gender differences in mental health may be due to the fact that women who work for pay outside the home have added the stressors associated with paid employment to their lives with little concomitant decrease in the stressors associated with their family roles.

Managers and professionals are more able to cope with the stressors in their life

Managers and professionals can be considered to be in better overall mental and physical health than employees who occupy blue and pink collar jobs (e.g. clerical, administrative, production positions). This finding is particularly striking given the fact that the managers and professionals in our sample were more likely than the blue and pink collar employees to work long hours, take work home with them, and report high role overload, high work to family interference, negative work to family spillover and high job stress—conditions which are generally a recipe for poorer mental health.

Taken in concert, these findings indicate that managerial and professional employees are more able than their non-professional counterparts to cope with these higher work demands. These findings are consistent with the literature presented in Report One, which report that employees in professional positions have a greater perception of control than non-professionals and that it is these higher levels of control that help them cope with heavier work demands. Unfortunately, we still do not know what contributes to this increased sense of control: better working conditions, more interesting work, higher levels of flexibility, higher job security, increased job mobility (linked to their higher levels of education), higher socio-economic status (i.e. more formal education, higher incomes). These data also suggest that the physical and mental health issues observed in the "other" group may be more a function of their work environment, the types of jobs they do and their working conditions rather than the time spent in work itself.

Female managers and professionals are at higher risk of burnout

The data suggest that managerial and professional positions and motherhood are not compatible in that they both impose heavy demands. Females who work in managerial and professional positions are more likely to experience symptoms of burnout than any other group of employees. These higher levels of burnout can be attributed to the fact that this group of women appears to be in a "no win" position with respect to work and family—they have heavier work demands than other women and heavier family demands than men. The data reviewed in this study indicate that female managers and professionals are more likely than workers in any other group to try to "burn the candle at both ends"—succeed at a high-level job while not sacrificing standards at home. Such a strategy appears to be unsustainable over time.

Employees without dependent care responsibilities are in better physical and mental health

The data are also unequivocal with respect to the impact of parenthood and/or elder care on employees' physical and mental health. The greater the number of non-work demands assumed by an employee, the more likely the employee is to report stress, burnout and that their health is fair/poor. In other words, the job of parent/elder caregiver can be considered to be a high-demand, low-control position—one which we know challenges an individual's ability to cope. Individuals or couples without children or elder care can act relatively independently as they do not have the constraints of caring for children or elderly dependents—or the demands. The addition of the parent/elder caregiver role complicates an employee's life situation, however, as it places greater demands on them at the same time as it adds constraints. These data suggest that efforts to more proactively manage a more diverse workforce, and policies and programs to help working mothers and fathers and those with elder care issues have had no appreciable impact on this group of employees.

Motherhood presents more mental health challenges than fatherhood

Parenthood appears to have a different impact on the life satisfaction of mothers than fathers. Fatherhood is not associated with life satisfaction for men. Mothers, however, are less satisfied with their lives than women without children. These differences were observed in both the 1991 and 2001 samples (see Duxbury and Higgins, 2001). Similar findings were observed with respect to depressed mood. Mothers are more likely to report high depressed mood than women without children/elder care. Having either child care or elder care responsibilities was not, however, associated with depressed mood for men.

These findings support the research literature in the area which suggests that the role of working mother is qualitatively different from the role of working father and that these differences are having a negative impact on the mental health of working mothers. Further research is needed to determine if these differences are due to social, workplace or family factors (or some combination) so that targeted policies can be developed and supports implemented.

7.8 Recommendations

The data reviewed in this study leave little doubt that high work-life conflict is associated with substandard organizational performance, increased absenteeism, impaired family functioning, reduced satisfaction with the family domain and employees' physical and mental health problems. In other words, high work-life conflict negatively affects employees' ability to work productively, enjoy and nurture their families and live a meaningful and satisfying life.

The following key themes can be seen in the above data:

- Work-life balance is a complex phenomenon.
- Work and life are not separate domains.
- Work-life conflict is positively associated with role demands. It does not matter if the demands stem from the work or non-work domains—the more demands placed on an employee, the more difficulties they will experience with respect to balance.
- More Canadians meet work demands at the expense of their family than the reverse (i.e. only 10% report high family to work interference).
- Work-life conflict in Canada is most likely to be manifested in two ways: role overload and negative work to family spillover.

There is no "one size fits all solution" to the issue of work-life conflict. The data from this study show quite clearly that different policies, practices and strategies will be needed to reduce each of the five components of work-life conflict: role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference, caregiver strain and negative work to family spillover. That being said, the data indicate that there are a number of strategies and approaches that the various stakeholders in this issue (e.g. employers, employees, families, unions and governments) can use to reduce work-life conflict. Recommendations targeted at each of these groups are given below.

When reading through this set of recommendations, the reader will notice that most of these strategies fall into two broad groupings: reduce demands (at either work or home) or increase the amount of control the employee has over the work-life interface. Either of these strategies should yield positive results.

7.8.1 What Can Employers Do to Reduce Work-Life Conflict?

To reduce work-life conflict and to improve their bottom line, employers need to focus their efforts on the following sets of initiatives:

- make work demands and work expectations more realistic;
- provide flexibility around work;
- increase employees' sense of control; and
- focus on creating a more supportive work environment.

Make work expectations more realistic

While there are many "programs" available to help employees meet family obligations, these programs or options do not diminish the fact that most people simply have more work to do than can be accomplished by one person in a standard work week. The issue of work-life conflict can not be addressed without addressing the issue of workloads. While a full discussion of workload issues can be found in Report One in this series, it is worthwhile to note the following:

> "Comparisons done using the 1991 and 2001 samples suggest that time in work has increased over the decade. Whereas one in ten respondents in 1991 worked 50 or more hours per week, one in four does so now; during this same time period, the proportion of employees working between 35 and 39 hours per week declined from 48% of the sample to 27%. This

> increase in time in work was observed for all job groups and all sectors." (Report One, Higgins and Duxbury, 2002).

Further work is needed to determine why work demands have increased over the decade. Competing explanations drawn from the data include:

- organizational anorexia (downsizing—especially of the middle manager cadre—has meant that there are not enough employees to do the work and managers to strategize and plan);
- corporate culture (if you do not work long hours and take work home you will not advance in your career, not keep your job during downsizing);
- increased use of technology (data collected elsewhere in the survey provide partial support for this supposition);
- global competition (work hours have been extended to allow work across time zones, increased competition and a desire to keep costs down have limited the number of employees it is deemed feasible to hire);
- the speed of change has increased to the point where many organizations have lost their ability to plan and prioritize—workloads increase when organizations practise crisis management (partial support for this hypothesis comes from data collected elsewhere in the survey); and
- employees are worried about the consequences of "not being seen to be a contributor"
  - non-professionals may fear that they will lose their jobs if they do not work overtime,
  - professionals may worry that their career will stagnate if they do not work overtime.

As one respondent noted at the end of the survey:

> "Changing expectations have driven us to a fast-paced and hectic lifestyle. We have less people to do the same jobs but jobs have also changed due to technology. We are constantly revving the engine and if not enough oil gets on the pistons, the engine blows up. Business and industry and government need to recognize this and find ways to assist."

Accordingly, we offer the following set of recommendations which we feel to be critical with respect to this issue:

1. Employers need to identify ways of reducing employee workloads (this is especially true for NFP sector employers). Special attention needs to be given to reducing the workloads of managers and professionals in all sectors.

2. Employers need to examine workloads within their organizations. If they find that certain employees within their organization are consistently spending long hours at work (e.g. 50 + hours per week), they need to determine why this is occurring (e.g. ambitious, work expectations are unbalanced and unrealistic, poor planning, too many priorities, do not have the tools and/or training to do the job efficiently, poor management, culture focused on hours not output). Once they have determined the causal factors, they need to determine how workloads can be made more reasonable.

3. Employers need to recognize that unrealistic work demands are not sustainable over time and come at a cost to the organization which is often not recognized or tracked. Accordingly, we recommend that the employer start recording the costs of understaffing and overwork (e.g. greater absenteeism, higher prescription drug costs, greater employee assistance program use, increased turnover, hiring costs), so that they can make informed decisions with respect to this issue.

4. Employers need to identify ways to reduce the amount of time employees spend in job-related travel (e.g. increase their use of virtual teams, teleconferencing technology). In particular, they need to reduce their expectations that employees will travel on their personal time and spend weekends away from home to reduce the organization's travel costs.

5. Many of Canada's larger employers appear to be "anorexic," especially at the management and professional level (e.g. they do not have enough people to do the job in a reasonable amount of time). Accordingly, we recommend that employers analyze workloads and hire more people in those areas where the organization is overly reliant on unpaid overtime.

6. Employers need to track the amount of time employees spend working paid and unpaid overtime and capturing the number of hours it actually takes to get various jobs done. They should also collect data which reflect the total costs of delivering high quality work in various areas on time (e.g. paid and unpaid overtime, subsequent turnover, employee assistance program use, absenteeism). Such data should be longitudinal in nature as many of the consequences of poor people management do not appear until 6 to 12 months after the event. This type of data should improve planning and priority setting, as well as allow senior executives to make better strategic, long-term decisions.

7. Employers need to change their accountability frameworks and reward structures. They need to stop rewarding long hours and unpaid overtime work and instead focus on rewarding accurate work plans and sound human resource management. This issue will be addressed further in Report Five. The following comments from survey participants reflect this issue:

   > "I believe that existing work/balance policies are adequate, but can be improved upon. I also think that management wants to address problems but is trapped in a culture that measures performance and individual contribution by the old standard of time and ability, rather than by quality."

   > "Although my employer has invested a lot of effort in studying the issue of work/family balance and in promoting it, the 'work culture' speaks to a different situation. Until the management cadre start to "walk the talk," the current situation and its implied expectations will continue (employees are considered 'serious' and 'good managers' based upon the number of hours they are at the office). Meetings with senior management are often scheduled after the end of a typical day. There is still a tendency to look down on those employees who choose to respect the normal (paid) work day, and leave to take care of family/home responsibilities."

8. Employers have to develop an etiquette around the use of office technologies such as email, laptops and cell phones. They need, for example, to set limits on the use of technology to support after-hours work, make expectations regarding response times more realistic. The following comments from survey participants speak to this:

   > "The amount of work, regardless of organization, has increased dramatically in the last decade—particularly with the increase in technology. We have the same bodies as workers of a generation ago—but today we can have someone in our office, an incoming phone call, voice mails and emails all at once. Technology has added the expectation of immediate response—and solution—to the workplace."

   > "Electronic tools have increased the expectations of availability—anytime, anywhere, immediate answers expected. After hours, during business travel, Sunday and Friday nights, you are now expected to use this time to return voice mail and emails."

Employers can increase flexibility with respect to work time and work location

In Report One, we determined that the majority of Canadians in both the 1991 and 2001 samples work "regular" hours (e.g. little to no formal flexibility with respect to arrival and departure times; no work location flexibility). Furthermore, we found that the percentage of respondents using the most desired "family-friendly" flexible work arrangements (flextime and telework) has not changed over the decade and remains relatively low (approximately 20% work flextime and 1% telework). In fact, for many Canadian employees, the amount of flexibility they had over their work schedules deteriorated over the decade as the percentage of the workforce who use work schedules known to increase work–life conflict and perceived stress (e.g. rotating shifts, fixed shifts, atypical work arrangements) increased. We also noted that access to flexible work arrangements is not evenly distributed throughout the workforce, and the employees who have the greatest need for flexible work arrangements (i.e. parents and employees with elder care responsibilities) do not have access to them.

These data suggest that despite all the talk about being "family friendly," many of Canada's larger employers have not yet implemented flexible work arrangements. Accordingly, we recommend the following:

9. Employers need to provide employees with more flexibility around when and where they work. The criteria under which these flexible arrangements can be used should be mutually agreed upon and transparent. There should also be mutual accountability around their use (i.e. employees need to meet job demands but organizations should be flexible with respect to how work is arranged). The process for changing hours of work or the location of work should, wherever possible, be flexible.

10. It is very difficult (if not impossible) to implement flexible work arrangements in organizations where the focus is on hours rather than output and presence rather than performance. This means that organizations that want to increase work–life balance need to introduce new performance measures that focus on objectives, results and output (i.e. move away from a focus on hours to a focus on output). To do this, they need to reward output, not hours and reward what is done, not where it is done. They also need to publically reward people who have successfully combined work and non-work domains and not promote those who work long hours and expect others to do the same.

Employers need to give employees more control over their work

Employers need to introduce initiatives to increase an employee's sense of control. The research in this area is quite clear—employees can cope with greater demands if they have a greater sense of control. The literature suggests a number of mechanisms which should be investigated, including increased autonomy and empowerment at the individual employee level, the increased use of self-directed work teams, increased employee participation in decision making, increased communication and information sharing, time management training, training on how to plan and prioritize, etc. We offer the following recommendations in this area:

11. Give employees the right to refuse overtime work. Saying "no" to overtime work should not be a career-limiting move. Some organizations may want to give management limited discretion to override the employee's right to refuse overtime (e.g. emergency situation, operational requirements), but this should be the exception not the rule.

12. Employers should implement time-off arrangements in lieu of overtime pay.

13. Employers should provide a limited number of days of paid leave per year for child care, elder care or personal problems.

14. Employers need to make it easier for employees to transfer from full-time to part-time work and vice versa. They should introduce prorated benefits for part-time work, guarantee a return to full-time status for those who elect to work part-time and allow an employee's seniority ranking and service to be maintained.

15. Employers should provide appropriate support for their employees who work rotating shifts. What is an appropriate support should be determined by consulting with employees who work rotating shifts. Policies that have been found to be effective in this regard include limits to split shifts, advanced notice of shift changes and permitting shift trades (i.e. allowing employees to change shift times with one another).

Employers need to focus on the work environment

To address the issue of work–life conflict, employers need to create more supportive work environments. This means changing reward structures, accountability and measurement systems. Again, the need for such a focus can be seen by reading the following comment made by a study participant:

> "I think that we won't have achieved the objective until it becomes socially unacceptable to write emails on evenings/weekends, brag about long hours and schedule meetings outside 'core' hours. Although there is much talk about balance, long hours are still rewarded and equated to dedication to the job. Senior managers who talk the most about the need for balance are the worst offenders."

16. While the recommendations that precede this one will all act to make the work environment more supportive, we would recommend the following specific steps be taken by organizations which wish to focus their efforts on cultural change:

    - Work with employees to identify the types of support they would like (i.e. diagnose the situation) and which types could be accommodated within the organization. Not all supportive policies are feasible and practical in every context.
    - Develop and implement appropriate supportive policies. The development phase should include an analysis of the potential problems associated with the implementation of each policy and suggestions on how these problems could be addressed.
    - Communicate to employees the various policies that are available. Indicate how these policies can be accessed and any restrictions to their use. Repeat these communications on a regular basis (e.g. every couple of months). Publish these data on the company's Intranet.
    - Encourage employees to use the policies by having senior management model appropriate behaviours, conducting information sessions on the policies and how they can be used (e.g.

lunch and learns), communicating how these policies are being used successfully in this organization and others (e.g. communicate best practice), etc. Employees must be made to feel that their career will not be jeopardized if they take advantage of supportive policies.

- Measure the use of the different supportive policies and reward those sections of the organization that demonstrate best practices in these areas. Investigate those areas where use is low.

17. Implement cafeteria benefits packages which allow employees to select those benefits which are most appropriate to their personal situation on a yearly basis.

18. Offer child and elder care referral services.

7.8.2 What Can Employees Do to Reduce Work–Life Conflict?

What can individual employees do with respect to work–life balance? While the options in this regard are more limited than what employers can do (in our opinion, many families are using all available options with respect to coping), we offer the following recommendations to individual employees:

19. Take advantage of the supportive policies and flexible work arrangements available within your organization.

20. Raise work–life balance issues in your discussions within the workplace and within the community.

21. Educate yourself on how to deal effectively with stress.

22. Say "no" to overtime hours if work expectations are unreasonable.

23. Try to limit the amount of work you take home in the evenings. Employees who take work home should make every effort to separate time in work from family time (e.g. do work after the children go to bed, have a home office).

24. Try to limit the amount of time you spend in job-related travel.

7.8.3 What Can Governments Do to Reduce Work–Life Conflict?

There is a need for consistency with respect to labour standards and legislative requirements pertaining to work–life conflict. For example, at the present time, labour standards legislation in most Canadian jurisdictions[30] (exceptions include Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan) does not provide employees with an explicit right to refuse overtime (thereby limiting their ability to control their workloads). Similarly, many jurisdictions do not allow employees the right to time off in lieu of overtime (at the present time, only Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec and Yukon have such a provision in their labour standards legislation). Such standards would provide a starting point for organizations in developing workplace policies and practices that address work–life conflict issues. We, therefore, recommend that governments implement legislation:

25. Which stipulates that an employer's management rights do not include an implied right to require an employee to work overtime, except in the case of an emergency.

26. That gives employees the right to time off in lieu of overtime pay.

27. That entitles employees to up to five days of paid personal leave per year. This leave should be available on short notice and the employee should not be required to provide a reason for his or her absence. Such stipulations would give employees the flexibility to deal with personal/family matters with a large degree of confidentiality.

28. Includes specific language around long-term unpaid leave for the care of an elderly dependent. (An elderly parent can require full-time care for a longer period of time than can be granted under short-term leave. This need is infrequently recognized.)

We also recommend that governments provide assistance outside of legislation by taking the following actions:

29. Governments need to take the lead with respect to the issue of child care. In particular they need to determine how to best help employed Canadians deal with child care issues (i.e. develop appropriate policies for parents of children of various ages, identify and implement relevant supports).

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[30] The exact wording of this legislation and other legislation quoted in this section can be found in Rochon, C. (2000). *Work and Family Provisions in Canadian Collective Agreements*, HRDC Labour Program, Strategic Policy Division, Ottawa.

30. Governments need to take the lead with respect to the issue of elder care. In particular, they need to determine how to best help employed Canadians deal with elder care issues (i.e. develop appropriate policies, identify and implement relevant supports).

31. Governments need to "lead by example" with respect to the availability and accessibility of flexible work arrangements (i.e. it is not enough just to offer a wide variety of alternative work arrangements, employees must feel that they can use such arrangements without penalty).

32. Governments need to investigate ways to increase Canadians' awareness of how social roles and responsibilities have changed over the past several decades, what changes still need to happen, and why (e.g. social marketing campaign, education programs in schools, advertisements). Such changes are necessary to address the issues identified for female managers and professionals.

33. Governments need to examine how they can reduce the "financial penalties" associated with parenthood (i.e. determine how to concretely recognize that these employees have higher costs). Suggestions here include identifying ways to make it financially feasible for one partner to stay home during the time period when family demands are particularly high (i.e. when children are young).

34. Governments need to examine how they can reduce caregiver strain associated with elder care responsibilities. One idea is to consider a leave policy similar to parental leave to allow employees to care for dying parents. Such a policy should be funded by the federal government.

35. Governments at all levels need to place work–life balance of Canadians at the top of their agenda if they want the country to remain globally competitive and the health care system to be financially viable.

36. Governments should also contribute to work–life balance initiatives by:

    - funding research in the area;
    - disseminating relevant information to key stakeholders;
    - developing and offering appropriate educational programs (e.g. educate companies on the bottom line impact of imbalance; educate employees and families on how to cope).

The data also indicate that families which have greater financial resources are more able to cope with work–life balance. The exact causal mechanism is hard to determine but is probably linked to the fact that families with greater disposable incomes report higher perceived control (e.g. can afford to leave a non-supportive work environment, can purchase goods and services which increase balance). This suggests that one way to reduce work–life conflict is to find ways to make "work pay." Options in this regard could include tax credits, changes to the minimum wage, etc.

7.8.4 What Can Unions Do to Reduce Work–Life Conflict?

Unions have an important role to play in the establishment of family-friendly practices in the workplace. We recommend that unions:

37. Become advocates of employee work–life balance by undertaking public campaigns to raise awareness of work–life issues and suggest ways in which the situation can be improved. This advocacy should be done outside the collective bargaining process;

38. Include work–life provisions (e.g. flexible work arrangements, family-friendly benefits) in negotiations during the collective bargaining process with the objective of gaining new accommodations in collective agreements; and

39. Set up educational campaigns to:

    - increase individual worker's knowledge of work–life balance issues; and
    - give employees the tools they need to effectively deal with situations as they arise.

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Appendix A

Work–Life Conflict

1. By Gender and Job Type

Work–Life Conflict: Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Role Overload				
Low	12.3%	8.3%	16.8%	12.3%
Medium	33.7%	24.4%	37.9%	28.3%
High	54.0%	67.3%	45.3%	59.5%
Work to Family Interference				
Low	29.5%	27.1%	37.9%	43.3%
Medium	38.4%	38.9%	38.3%	35.6%
High	32.1%	34.0%	23.8%	21.1%
Family to Work Interference				
Low	58.4%	58.4%	59.2%	60.7%
Medium	33.5%	31.2%	33.3%	29.4%
High	8.1%	10.4%	7.5%	10.0%
Caregiver Strain				
Monthly or Less	82.5%	70.9%	78.3%	67.3%
Weekly	12.2%	19.4%	14.7%	20.0%
Several Days a Week or Daily	5.3%	9.6%	7.0%	12.6%
Work to Family Spillover				
Negative Impact	46.0%	53.5%	36.1%	39.4%
No Impact	44.5%	38.8%	50.8%	52.6%
Positive Impact	9.5%	7.7%	11.1%	8.0%

Work to Family Spillover: Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent with Partner				
Negative Impact	47.9%	53.9%	39.0%	35.5%
No Impact	40.3%	36.4%	48.5%	55.1%
Positive Impact	11.8%	9.7%	12.5%	9.4%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent with Children				
Negative Impact	52.4%	61.0%	43.0%	44.2%
No Impact	36.4%	29.6%	45.1%	46.6%
Positive Impact	11.2%	9.4%	11.9%	9.2%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Elder Care				
Negative Impact	41.1%	51.5%	35.1%	35.0%
No Impact	49.8%	40.0%	56.1%	57.4%
Positive Impact	9.1%	8.5%	8.8%	7.6%
How Work Affects Relationship with Partner				
Negative Impact	44.5%	48.0%	37.2%	35.0%
No Impact	43.2%	40.4%	49.6%	54.0%
Positive Impact	12.2%	11.6%	13.2%	11.0%
How Work Affects Relationship with Children				
Negative Impact	43.3%	51.1%	36.7%	37.9%
No Impact	45.1%	37.9%	50.7%	52.3%
Positive Impact	11.6%	11.1%	12.6%	9.8%
How Work Affects Sharing of Family Responsibilities				
Negative Impact	43.3%	43.4%	36.4%	33.6%
No Impact	45.0%	44.0%	50.8%	54.7%
Positive Impact	11.6%	12.6%	12.8%	11.7%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Leisure Activities				
Negative Impact	58.1%	66.7%	47.8%	51.1%
No Impact	30.0%	23.8%	38.1%	39.1%
Positive Impact	11.9%	9.5%	14.1%	9.8%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Volunteer Activities				
Negative Impact	41.7%	54.7%	34.4%	39.3%
No Impact	49.7%	39.2%	57.2%	54.6%
Positive Impact	8.6%	6.1%	8.4%	6.1%

2. By Gender and Dependent Care Status

Work–Life Conflict: Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care
Role Overload				
Low	17.7%	11.5%	13.9%	7.6%
Medium	39.2%	32.7%	31.1%	22.6%
High	43.1%	55.8%	55.0%	69.8%
Work to Family Interference				
Low	37.3%	29.0%	41.4%	31.9%
Medium	37.7%	38.8%	35.2%	38.4%
High	24.9%	32.2%	23.5%	29.7%
Family to Work Interference				
Low	66.4%	53.0%	68.0%	52.2%
Medium	28.0%	37.0%	24.3%	35.2%
High	5.6%	10.0%	7.6%	12.7%
Caregiver Strain				
Monthly or Less	86.6%	79.5%	78.3%	66.6%
Weekly	9.4%	14.0%	12.5%	21.5%
Several Days a Week or Daily	4.0%	6.4%	9.2%	11.8%
Work to Family Spillover				
Negative Impact	37.6%	48.2%	40.6%	49.7%
No Impact	52.6%	42.1%	50.8%	43.1%
Positive Impact	10.7%	9.7%	8.6%	7.2%

Work to Family Spillover: Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care
How Work Affects Amount of Time with Partner				
Negative Impact	38.2%	48.6%	38.6%	47.3%
No Impact	49.3%	39.6%	51.8%	43.3%
Positive Impact	12.4%	11.8%	9.7%	9.4%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent with Children				
Negative Impact	39.1%	54.1%	43.5%	56.9%
No Impact	49.2%	34.6%	47.4%	33.7%
Positive Impact	11.8%	11.4%	9.0%	9.4%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Elder Care				
Negative Impact	33.1%	42.3%	36.5%	46.1%
No Impact	57.6%	49.0%	55.4%	46.1%
Positive Impact	9.4%	8.7%	8.1%	7.8%
How Work Affects Relationship with Partner				
Negative Impact	36.1%	45.5%	36.1%	44.6%
No Impact	50.8%	42.2%	52.2%	44.5%
Positive Impact	13.1%	12.2%	11.7%	10.9%
How Work Affects Relationship with Children				
Negative Impact	33.8%	44.7%	38.1%	47.6%
No Impact	54.7%	43.1%	52.4%	41.5%
Positive Impact	11.5%	12.2%	11.7%	10.9%
How Work Affects Sharing of Family Responsibilities				
Negative Impact	33.1%	45.7%	33.2%	42.0%
No Impact	55.5%	43.1%	55.9%	44.9%
Positive Impact	11.4%	12.2%	10.9%	13.2%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Leisure Activities				
Negative Impact	48.4%	58.0%	52.5%	62.5%
No Impact	37.3%	30.3%	36.8%	28.7%
Positive Impact	14.3%	11.8%	10.6%	8.8%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Volunteer Activities				
Negative Impact	34.0%	42.2%	40.7%	50.5%
No Impact	57.2%	49.4%	52.5%	44.0%
Positive Impact	8.7%	8.4%	6.8%	5.5%

3. By Gender and Sector of Employment

Work–Life Conflict: Gender and Sector of Employment

	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Role Overload						
Low	14.6%	11.0%	15.0%	11.8%	11.4%	8.4%
Medium	35.8%	26.8%	35.7%	28.6%	34.2%	24.9%
High	49.6%	62.2%	49.3%	59.6%	54.4%	66.7%
Work to Family Interference						
Low	35.2%	40.6%	33.7%	39.3%	26.6%	28.0%
Medium	38.5%	36.9%	39.1%	35.1%	37.7%	38.7%
High	26.3%	22.5%	27.2%	25.6%	35.7%	33.3%
Family to Work Interference						
Low	57.6%	56.9%	59.7%	62.8%	60.0%	61.7%
Medium	34.1%	31.8%	32.5%	28.1%	32.7%	28.7%
High	8.3%	11.2%	7.7%	9.1%	7.3%	9.6%
Caregiver Strain						
Monthly or Less	80.0%	68.3%	83.0%	70.2%	81.7%	69.1%
Weekly	13.7%	20.3%	13.3%	18.7%	11.8%	19.6%
Several Days a Week or Daily	6.3%	11.3%	3.7%	11.1%	6.5%	11.3%
Work to Family Spillover						
Negative Impact	39.8%	42.2%	43.0%	42.2%	48.7%	52.6%
No Impact	49.8%	49.5%	47.8%	50.3%	41.3%	40.0%
Positive Impact	10.4%	8.4%	9.2%	7.4%	10.1%	7.4%

Work to Family Spillover: Gender and Sector of Employment

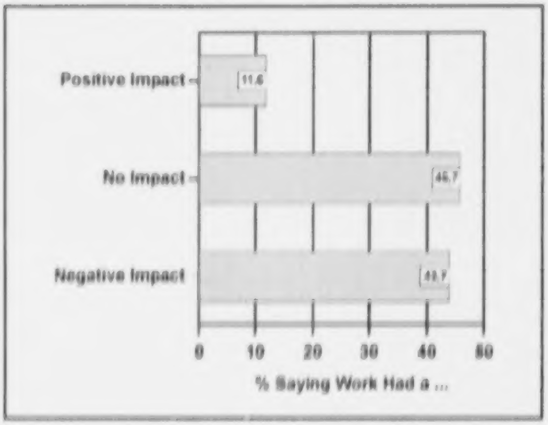
	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
How Work Affects Amount of Time with Partner						
Negative Impact	40.7%	38.6%	43.9%	39.9%	51.7%	53.1%
No Impact	46.9%	51.4%	46.0%	51.5%	35.7%	37.4%
Positive Impact	12.4%	10.0%	10.1%	8.5%	12.6%	9.6%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent with Children						
Negative Impact	44.7%	47.9%	48.6%	47.8%	55.8%	58.4%
No Impact	43.4%	42.6%	42.2%	44.0%	32.2%	31.9%
Positive Impact	12.0%	9.5%	9.2%	8.1%	12.0%	9.8%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Elder Care						
Negative Impact	34.8%	37.4%	37.6%	37.7%	46.4%	51.4%
No Impact	56.1%	54.3%	54.6%	55.8%	44.1%	40.2%
Positive Impact	9.1%	8.3%	7.7%	6.5%	9.4%	8.4%
How Work Affects Relationship with Partner						
Negative Impact	39.1%	36.6%	39.0%	37.2%	48.1%	49.2%
No Impact	48.2%	51.8%	48.9%	51.8%	39.3%	39.9%
Positive Impact	12.8%	11.6%	12.1%	11.0%	12.6%	10.9%
How Work Affects Relationship with Children						
Negative Impact	38.0%	39.7%	38.3%	41.5%	47.2%	50.6%
No Impact	50.0%	49.5%	50.8%	49.2%	40.3%	39.1%
Positive Impact	12.0%	10.8%	10.9%	9.3%	12.5%	10.2%
How Work Affects Sharing of Family Responsibilities						
Negative Impact	37.3%	34.7%	41.1%	35.3%	46.6%	44.4%
No Impact	50.0%	52.7%	48.8%	53.8%	41.4%	43.5%
Positive Impact	12.8%	12.6%	10.1%	11.0%	12.0%	12.1%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Leisure Activities						
Negative Impact	50.7%	54.1%	53.9%	54.0%	60.4%	66.0%
No Impact	36.1%	35.9%	35.1%	36.9%	26.5%	24.4%
Positive Impact	13.2%	9.9%	11.0%	9.2%	13.1%	9.6%
How Work Affects Amount of Time Spent in Volunteer Activities						
Negative Impact	36.7%	43.4%	36.6%	41.4%	44.0%	52.6%
No Impact	55.6%	50.7%	56.6%	52.8%	45.0%	40.6%
Positive Impact	7.7%	5.8%	6.9%	5.8%	11.0%	6.8%

Appendix B

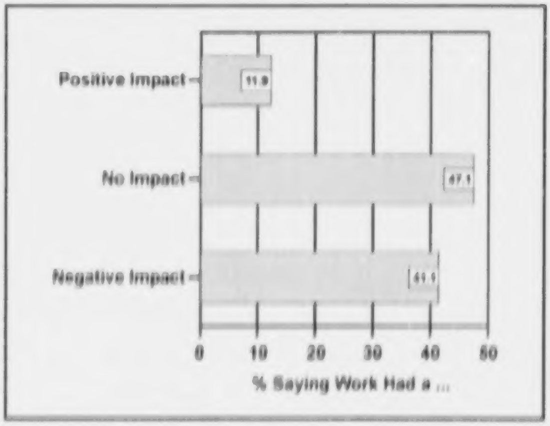
Work to Family Spillover

Impact of Work on:

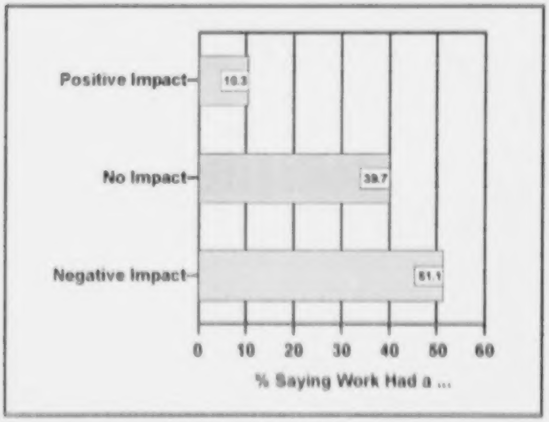
Time Spent with Partner



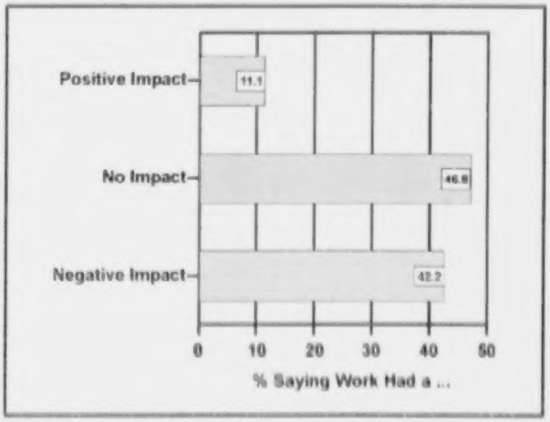
Relationship with Partner



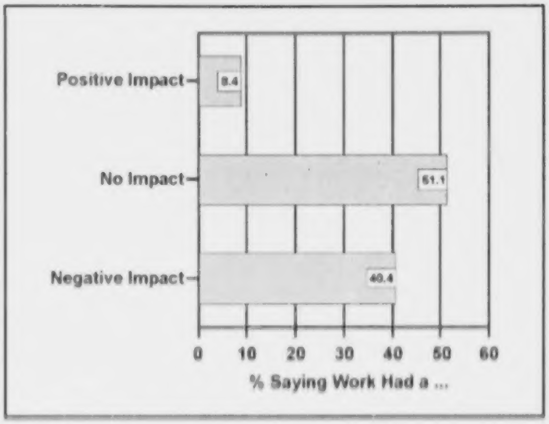
Time Spent with Children



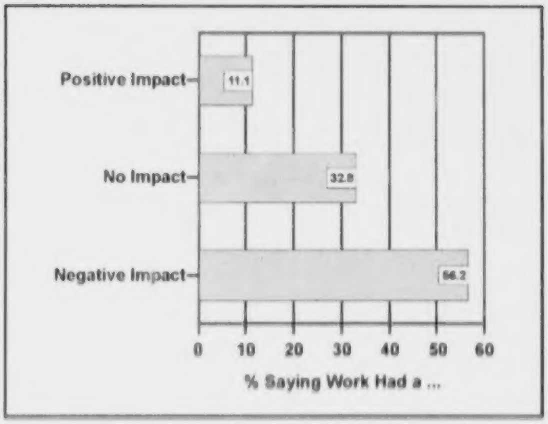
Relationship with Children



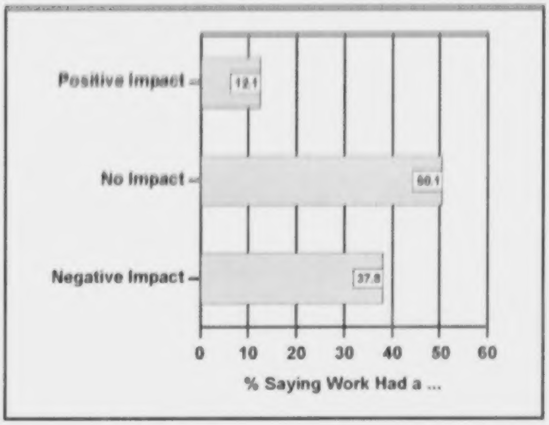
Time Spent in Elder Care



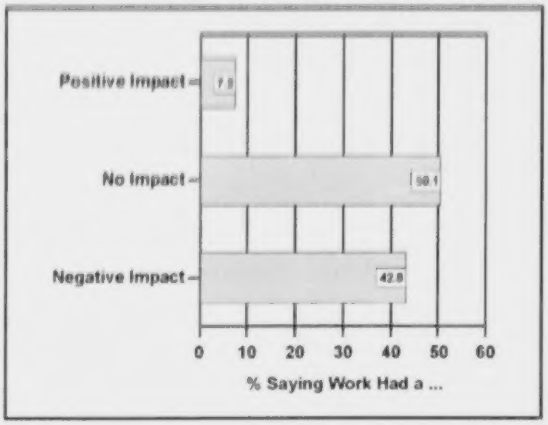
Time Spent in Leisure



Sharing of Family Responsibilities



Amount of Time Spent in Volunteer Activities



Appendix C
Organizational Outcomes

1. By Gender and Job Type

Organizational Outcomes by Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Organizational Commitment				
Low	10.6%	9.5%	15.7%	9.9%
Medium	35.3%	36.4%	38.1%	36.7%
High	54.1%	54.1%	46.2%	53.3%
Job Satisfaction				
Low	9.7%	10.0%	13.7%	10.6%
Medium	42.3%	42.9%	46.8%	43.6%
High	47.9%	47.1%	39.5%	45.7%
Job Stress				
Low	26.3%	25.8%	34.4%	36.4%
Medium	34.5%	34.3%	36.9%	33.4%
High	39.2%	40.0%	28.7%	30.2%
Rating of Organization as a Place to Work				
Below Average	17.2%	14.8%	20.4%	14.0%
Average	31.2%	38.4%	33.4%	38.7%
Above Average	51.6%	46.7%	46.2%	47.3%

Intent to Turnover by Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
How Often Thought About Leaving Organization				
Never	33.8%	37.6%	37.2%	43.2%
Monthly	35.3%	35.4%	32.3%	31.9%
Weekly	15.0%	13.9%	14.9%	11.7%
More Than Weekly	15.9%	13.1%	15.6%	13.2%
Reasons Given for Leaving Organization				
To Earn a Higher Salary	54.5%	41.5%	60.5%	48.6%
To Engage in More Interesting Work	33.6%	33.4%	41.6%	42.4%
Sense Lack of Recognition	48.6%	49.8%	52.1%	51.8%
Work Environment Not Supportive	28.9%	32.2%	28.8%	32.8%
Opportunities for Advancement Elsewhere	37.7%	31.2%	43.1%	34.9%
Frustrated by Work Environment	52.3%	54.6%	51.7%	54.3%
Work Expectations Unrealistic	25.8%	32.0%	19.6%	26.0%
More Time for Personal/Family Activities	30.7%	37.6%	26.5%	31.0%
Personality Conflicts with Workers or Manager	15.6%	16.4%	19.7%	23.0%
My Values and Organization's Not the Same	19.7%	18.4%	22.9%	17.6%
To Move Closer to Family Members	14.6%	14.2%	13.4%	13.0%

Absenteeism by Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Days Off Work – All Problems				
0 Days	36.8%	26.5%	34.2%	26.2%
1 to 2 Days	23.5%	24.2%	22.7%	22.2%
3+ Days	39.7%	49.3%	43.1%	51.6%
Days Off Work – Ill Health				
0 Days	54.0%	42.1%	50.2%	40.1%
1 to 2 Days	24.4%	28.1%	23.9%	27.4%
3+ Days	21.6%	29.1%	25.9%	32.5%
Days Off Work – Child-related Problems				
0 Days	76.7%	75.5%	76.3%	75.8%
1 to 2 Days	16.9%	15.0%	16.4%	14.7%
3+ Days	6.3%	9.5%	7.2%	9.5%
Days Off Work – Elder-related Problems				
0 Days	91.4%	89.3%	92.0%	89.3%
1 to 2 Days	5.2%	6.5%	4.9%	6.3%
3+ Days	3.5%	4.2%	3.1%	4.4%
Days Off – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue				
0 Days	72.2%	63.2%	70.2%	60.8%
1 to 2 Days	19.0%	26.8%	19.6%	27.4%
3+ Days	8.7%	10.0%	10.2%	11.8%

2. By Gender and Dependent Care Status

Organizational Outcomes by Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care
Organizational Commitment				
Low	12.8%	12.5%	9.9%	9.6%
Medium	36.0%	36.6%	36.6%	36.6%
High	51.2%	51.0%	53.5%	53.8%
Job Satisfaction				
Low	10.3%	11.9%	9.6%	11.0%
Medium	43.9%	44.8%	43.6%	43.1%
High	45.8%	43.3%	46.7%	45.9%
Job Stress				
Low	33.6%	26.6%	34.1%	30.0%
Medium	34.5%	36.0%	33.7%	33.8%
High	31.9%	37.4%	32.2%	36.3%
Rating of Organization as a Place to Work				
Below Average	17.9%	18.7%	13.5%	15.1%
Average	31.3%	32.5%	38.1%	39.0%
Above Average	50.7%	48.8%	48.4%	45.8%

Intent to Turnover by Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care
How Often Thought About Leaving Organization				
Never	33.1%	38.2%	40.2%	41.5%
Monthly	36.4%	31.3%	33.8%	32.9%
Weekly	15.3%	14.4%	13.4%	11.7%
More Than Weekly	15.1%	16.1%	12.6%	13.8%
Reasons Given for Leaving Organization				
To Earn a Higher Salary	57.5%	55.6%	44.5%	46.6%
To Engage in More Interesting Work	34.8%	39.7%	36.4%	41.8%
Sense Lack of Recognition	50.6%	48.8%	50.7%	48.7%
Work Environment Not Supportive	30.2%	27.6%	33.7%	32.2%
Opportunities for Advancement Elsewhere	39.6%	39.9%	31.7%	32.7%
Frustrated by Work Environment	51.5%	51.6%	54.2%	54.4%
Work Expectations Unrealistic	25.3%	20.3%	31.1%	25.7%
More Time for Personal/Family Activities	30.2%	25.7%	37.3%	29.9%
Personality Conflicts with Workers or Manager	17.9%	16.0%	19.7%	20.5%
My Values and Organization's Not the Same	21.2%	20.4%	18.8%	17.1%
To Move Closer to Family Members	13.7%	14.8%	12.8%	15.5%

Absenteeism by Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	**Dependent Care**	**No Dependent Care**	**Dependent Care**
Days Off Work – All Problems				
0 Days	41.6%	32.9%	30.2%	22.8%
1 to 2 Days	22.5%	23.6%	23.4%	22.7%
3+ Days	35.9%	43.5%	46.4%	54.5%
Days Off Work – Ill Health				
0 Days	54.3%	51.4%	42.4%	39.6%
1 to 2 Days	23.0%	25.0%	27.2%	28.1%
3+ Days	22.7%	23.6%	30.4%	32.3%
Days Off Work – Child-related Problems				
0 Days	88.9%	68.9%	84.7%	67.5%
1 to 2 Days	7.8%	22.7%	8.6%	20.5%
3+ Days	3.3%	8.4%	6.7%	12.0%
Days Off Work – Elder-related Problems				
0 Days	95.8%	88.8%	95.5%	83.6%
1 to 2 Days	2.4%	6.8%	2.6%	9.9%
3+ Days	1.7%	4.4%	1.9%	6.5%
Days Off Work – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue				
0 Days	72.5%	70.7%	63.3%	60.4%
1 to 2 Days	18.4%	19.9%	26.4%	27.9%
3+ Days	9.1%	9.4%	10.3%	11.7%

3. By Gender and Sector of Employment

Organizational Outcomes by Gender and Sector of Employment

	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Organizational Commitment						
Low	14.9%	9.4%	8.9%	9.3%	10.6%	10.6%
Medium	40.3%	38.4%	33.0%	33.0%	31.3%	37.4%
High	44.8%	52.2%	58.1%	57.8%	58.1%	52.0%
Job Satisfaction						
Low	11.5%	9.1%	11.0%	10.2%	10.8%	12.3%
Medium	45.2%	42.3%	42.3%	42.6%	42.4%	45.5%
High	43.3%	48.6%	46.7%	47.2%	46.7%	42.2%
Job Stress						
Low	29.5%	33.0%	33.4%	36.7%	27.2%	27.0%
Medium	35.4%	32.9%	37.2%	33.3%	34.2%	35.2%
High	35.1%	34.1%	29.4%	30.0%	38.6%	37.8%
Rating of Organization as a Place to Work						
Below Average	19.0%	14.1%	15.3%	13.5%	18.8%	15.3%
Average	33.4%	37.4%	29.6%	36.4%	31.0%	42.2%
Above Average	47.6%	48.5%	55.1%	50.1%	50.2%	42.5%

Intent to Turnover by Gender and Sector of Employment

	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
How Often Thought About Leaving Organization						
Never	31.0%	38.9%	38.5%	43.0%	40.5%	42.1%
Monthly	36.1%	34.5%	36.4%	33.8%	30.8%	32.1%
Weekly	15.5%	13.0%	12.8%	11.0%	14.7%	12.6%
More Than Weekly	17.4%	13.5%	13.2%	12.2%	13.9%	13.2%
Reasons Given for Leaving Organization						
To Earn a Higher Salary	60.3%	46.9%	65.1%	53.6%	41.0%	37.5%
To Engage in More Interesting Work	39.9%	41.0%	40.2%	43.7%	27.8%	30.9%
Sense Lack of Recognition	49.9%	50.0%	50.0%	49.5%	49.8%	53.5%
Work Environment Not Supportive	28.8%	31.8%	25.8%	28.0%	32.3%	36.8%
Opportunities for Advancement Elsewhere	42.7%	36.0%	40.5%	30.2%	33.0%	27.5%
Frustrated by Work Environment	52.3%	52.7%	46.1%	48.1%	56.9%	60.2%
Work Expectations Unrealistic	23.1%	26.3%	20.5%	25.6%	25.9%	34.3%
More Time for Personal/Family Activities	24.4%	29.2%	29.7%	36.1%	36.0%	39.8%
Personality Conflicts with Workers or Manager	18.1%	20.5%	15.1%	18.1%	16.4%	20.8%
My Values and Organization's Not the Same	23.4%	17.8%	17.6%	18.7%	19.8%	17.9%
To Move Closer to Family Members	13.2%	12.4%	10.4%	12.7%	18.4%	15.8%

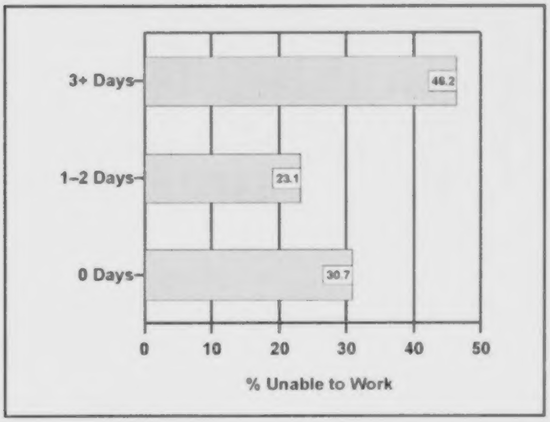
Absenteeism by Gender and Sector of Employment

	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Days Off Work – All Problems						
0 Days	30.0%	20.0%	44.6%	34.0%	43.2%	30.5%
1 to 2 Days	22.9%	21.3%	24.5%	25.8%	23.1%	23.7%
3+ Days	47.2%	58.8%	30.9%	40.2%	33.8%	45.8%
Days Off Work – Ill Health						
0 Days	45.9%	34.0%	61.5%	49.9%	59.5%	45.0%
1 to 2 Days	26.2%	28.3%	23.6%	27.0%	20.9%	27.1%
3+ Days	28.0%	37.7%	14.8%	23.1%	19.6%	27.8%
Days Off Work – Child-related Problems						
0 Days	73.2%	70.4%	80.5%	80.4%	81.7%	80.2%
1 to 2 Days	18.8%	17.1%	14.8%	12.8%	14.1%	12.8%
3+ Days	8.0%	12.5%	4.7%	6.7%	4.3%	7.0%
Days Off Work– Elder-related Problems						
0 Days	90.2%	87.2%	93.3%	92.7%	93.3%	90.2%
1 to 2 Days	6.0%	7.8%	4.2%	4.3%	3.7%	5.8%
3+ Days	3.8%	5.1%	2.4%	3.0%	3.0%	4.0%
Days Off Work – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue						
0 Days	66.1%	56.5%	76.9%	66.9%	76.1%	66.1%
1 to 2 Days	21.7%	29.4%	17.6%	24.9%	15.9%	25.4%
3+ Days	12.2%	14.1%	5.5%	8.2%	8.0%	8.5%

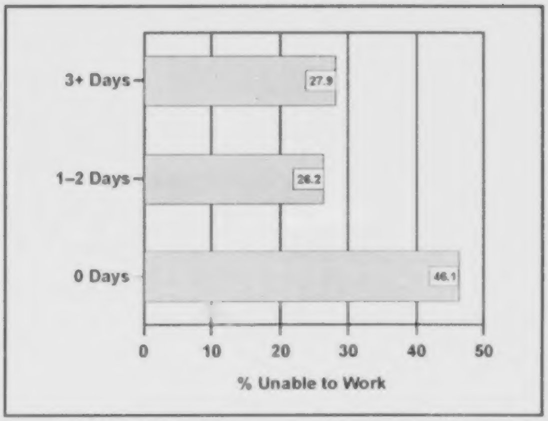
Appendix D

Absenteeism Due to Various Causes

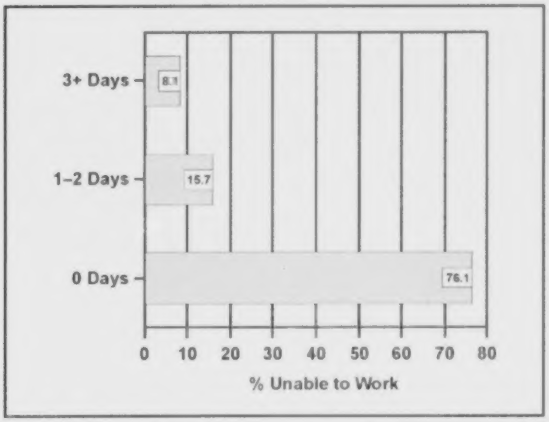
Absenteeism – All Problems



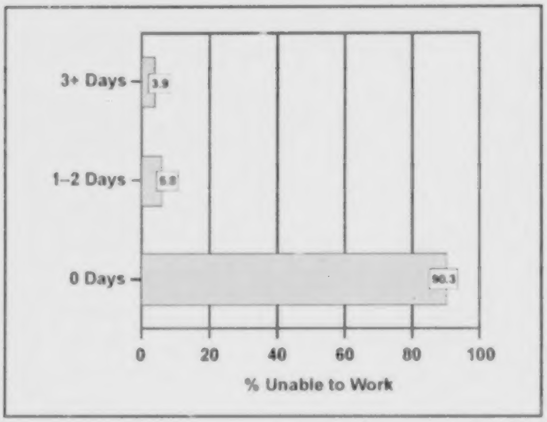
Absenteeism – Ill Health



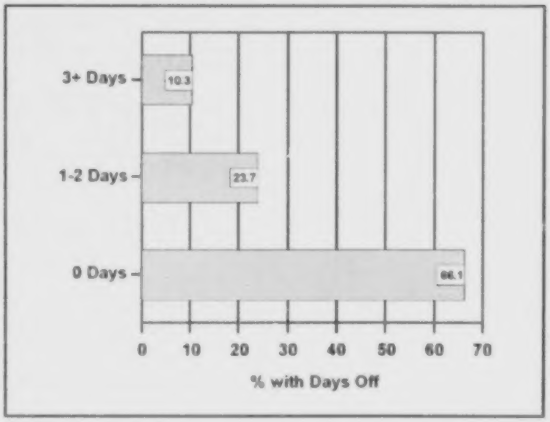
Absenteeism – Child-related Problems



Absenteeism –
Elder-related Problems



Absenteeism –
Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue



Appendix E

Impact of Work–Life Conflict on Organizational Outcomes

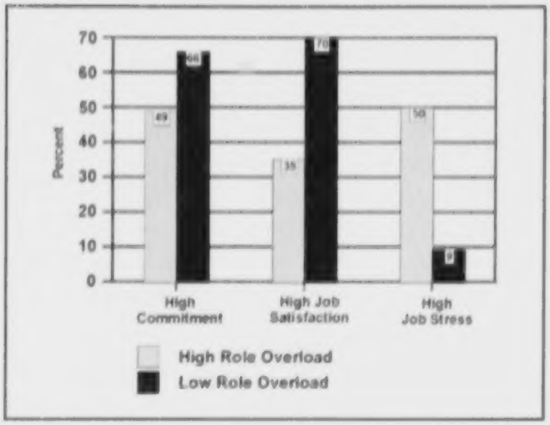
Organizational Outcomes

Outcomes	Role Overload		Work to Family Interference		Family to Work Interference		Caregiver Strain	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
% High Commitment	49	66	44	62	49	56	47	53
% High Job Satisfaction	35	70	24	66	37	51	35	46
% High Satisfaction With:								
• Job in general	61	80	54	77	60	70	56	67
• Pay	42	58	40	54	—	—	34	47
• Number of hours	47	85	31	85	51	62	—	—
• Schedule of hours	61	84	45	86	62	71	61	70
• Things to do at work	62	76	58	74	60	70	61	68
• Workload	30	71	21	63	36	47	36	43
• Career development	35	54	30	51	37	42	—	—
• Ability to meet career goals	34	53	30	49	32	43	—	—
• Job security	54	67	54	63	54	61	44	58
% High Job Stress	50	9	66	11	44	31	47	36
% Think of Leaving Organization:								
• Rarely	66	85	56	84	67	75	65	73
• Weekly	16	7	20	9	15	13	14	14
• Several times/week or daily	18	8	24	7	18	12	21	13
% Saying Would Leave For:								
• Higher pay	35	24	36	27	38	28	—	—
• More interesting work	—	—	—	—	28	21	—	—
• Lack of recognition	39	15	47	18	38	28	43	32
• Non-supportive work environment	25	7	33	8	25	17	28	20
• Career advancement	24	16	26	18	28	20	—	—
• Frustrating work environment	42	12	51	18	38	30	—	—
• Unrealistic work expectations	25	2	33	5	—	—	—	—
• More time personal/family	28	6	40	6	28	17	—	—
• Personality conflicts	15	5	17	7	—	—	—	—
• Values different from organization's	15	5	20	6	—	—	—	—
	—	—	15	5	—	—	—	—

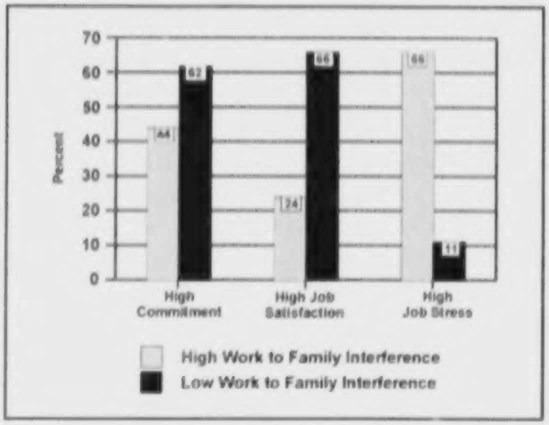
Organizational Outcomes *(continued)*

Outcomes	Role Overload		Work to Family Interference		Family to Work Interference		Caregiver Strain	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Rating of Organization as a Place to Work								
• Below average	20	10	26	11	17	15	22	17
• Average	40	24	41	27	38	33	41	36
• Above average	40	66	33	62	44	52	37	48
Absenteeism: All Causes								
• % 0 days	25	43	27	34	16	35	18	29
• % 1 to 2 days	22	25	20	25	17	43	14	23
• % 3 or more days	54	33	53	42	67	22	68	48
Absenteeism: Ill Health								
• % 0 days	42	55	44	48	36	50	38	46
• % 1 to 2 days	27	25	24	27	27	26	24	27
• % 3 or more days	31	20	32	25	37	24	38	27
Absenteeism: Child Care Problems								
• % 0 days	71	88	—	—	46	85	—	—
• % 1 to 2 days	18	8	—	—	26	11	—	—
• % 3 or more days	11	4	—	—	28	4	—	—
Absenteeism: Elder Care Problems								
• % 0 days	—	—	—	—	84	93	50	81
• % 1 to 2 days	—	—	—	—	9	4	24	17
• % 3 or more days	—	—	—	—	7	3	26	2
Absenteeism: Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue								
• % 0 days	60	80	59	71	55	70	54	66
• % 1 to 2 days	26	16	26	21	29	22	28	24
• % 3 or more days	14	4	15	8	16	9	18	10

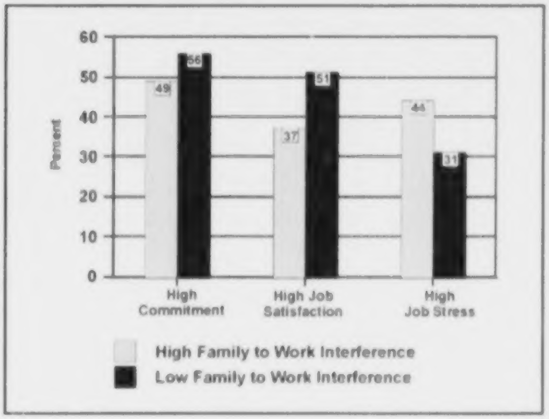
Organizational Outcomes by Role Overload



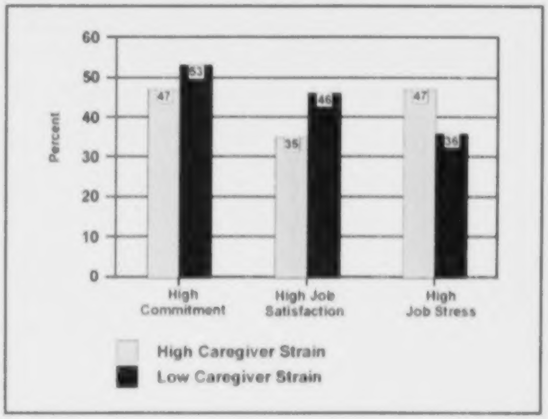
Organizational Outcomes by Work to Family Interference



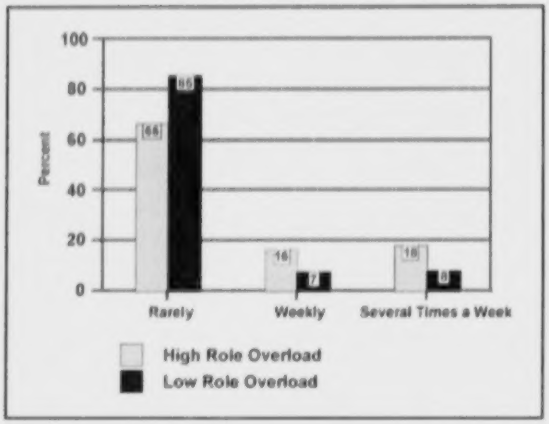
Organizational Outcomes by Family to Work Interference



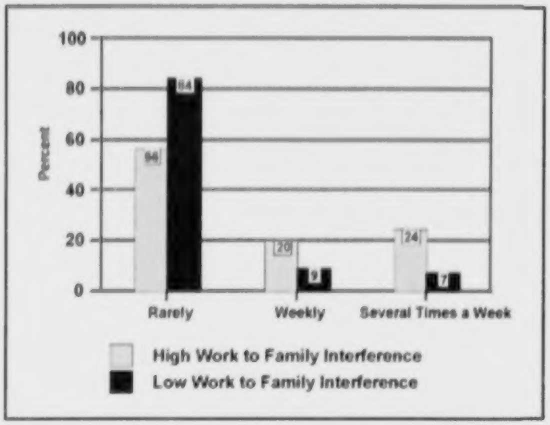
Organizational Outcomes by Caregiver Strain



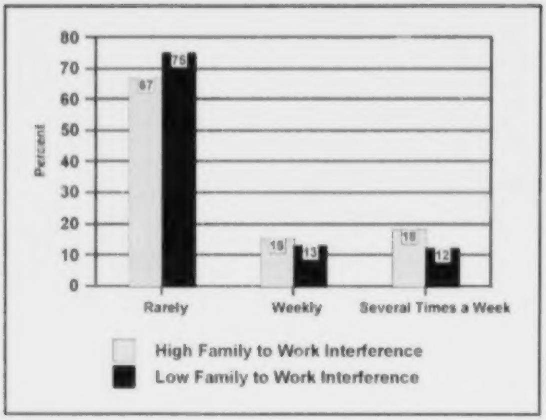
Organizational Outcomes – Thinking of Leaving Organization by Role Overload



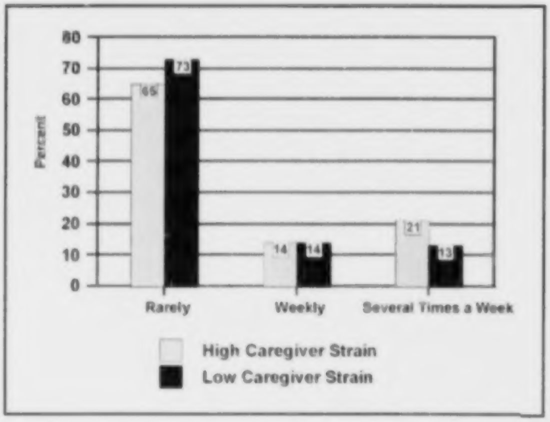
Organizational Outcomes – Thinking of Leaving Organization by Work to Family Interference



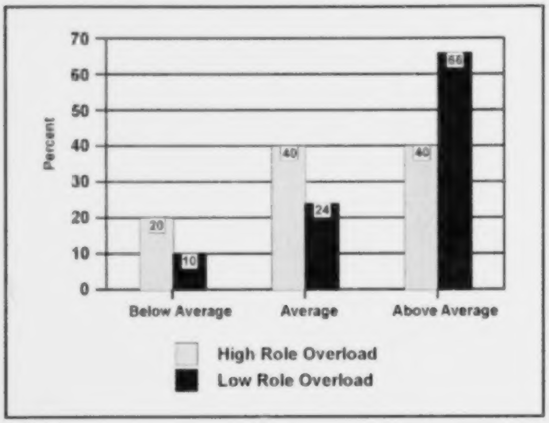
Organizational Outcomes – Thinking of Leaving Organization by Family to Work Interference



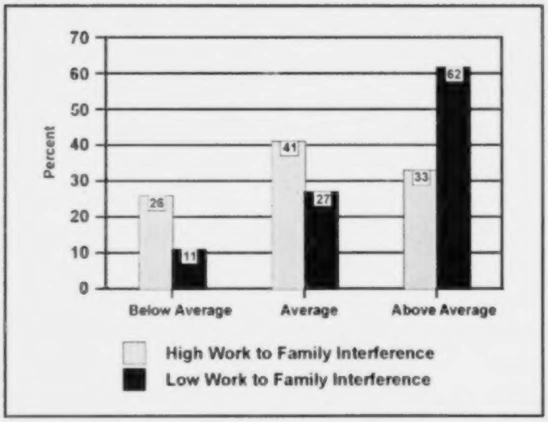
Organizational Outcomes – Thinking of Leaving Organization by Caregiver Strain



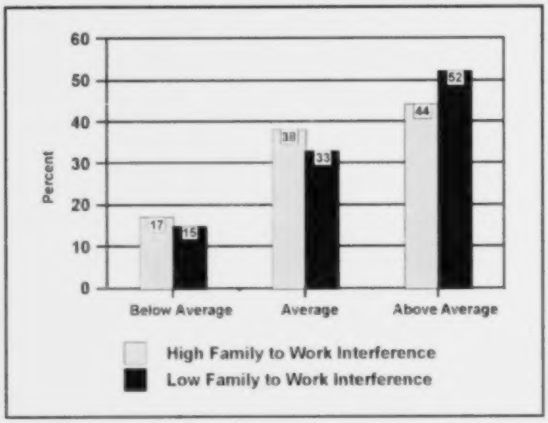
Organizational Outcomes – Rating of Organization as a Place to Work by Role Overload



Organizational Outcomes – Rating of Organization as a Place to Work by Work to Family Interference



Organizational Outcomes – Rating of Organization as a Place to Work by Family to Work Interference



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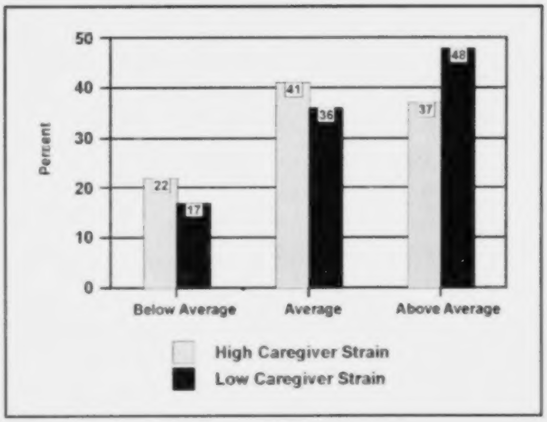
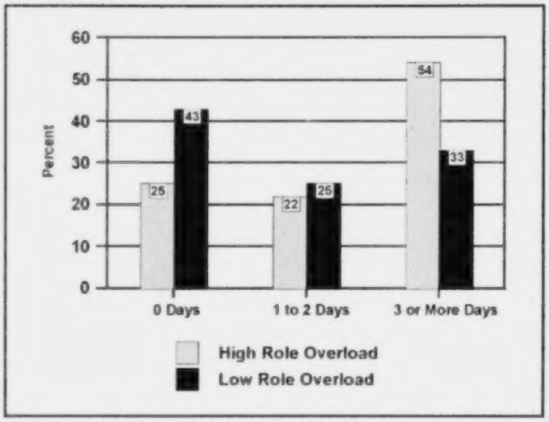
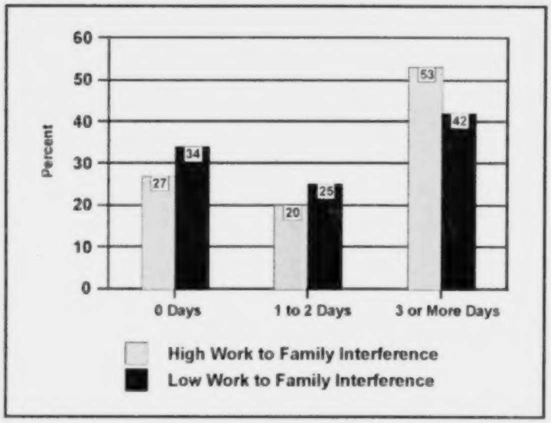


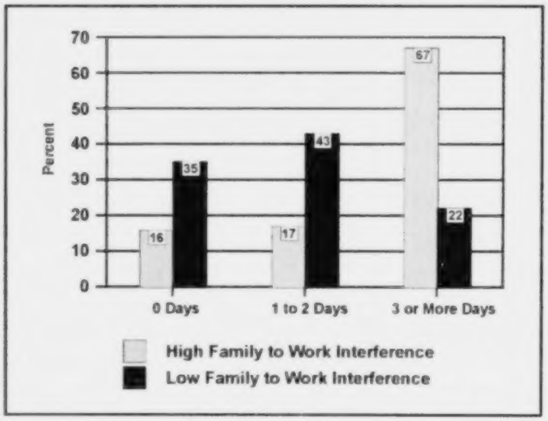
Absenteeism – All Causes by Role Overload



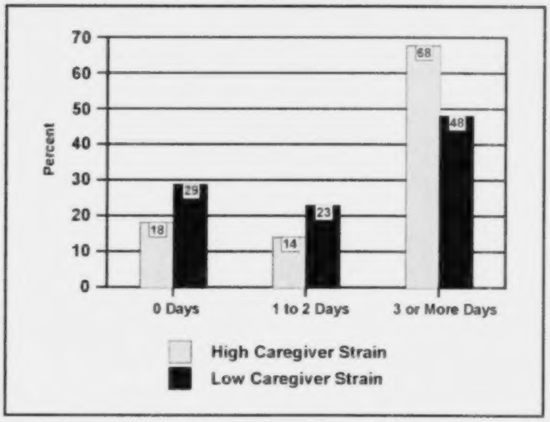
Absenteeism – All Causes by Work to Family Interference



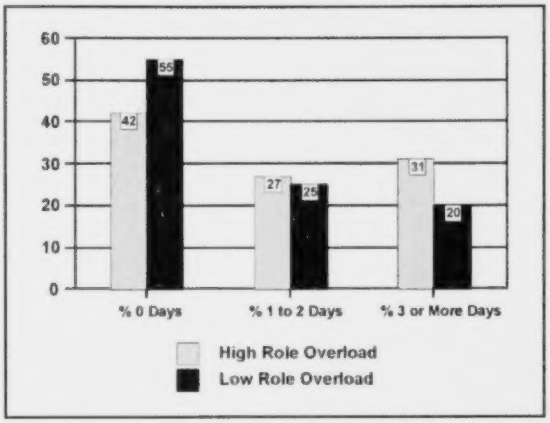
Absenteeism – All Causes by Family to Work Interference



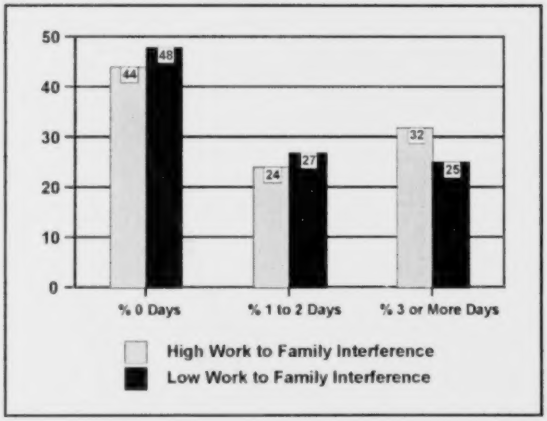
Absenteeism – All Causes by Caregiver Strain



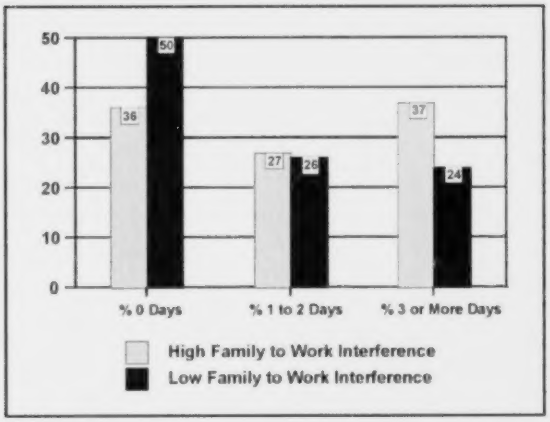
**Absenteeism –
Ill Health by Role Overload**



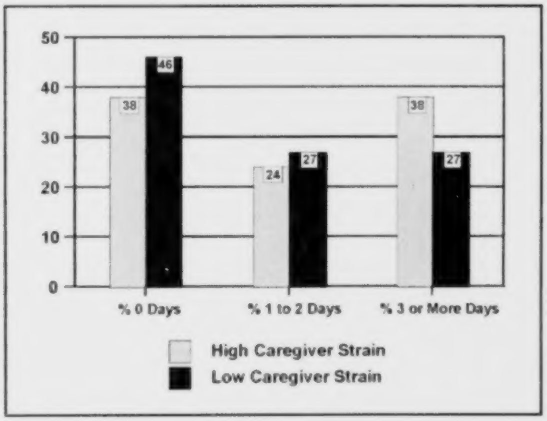
**Absenteeism – Ill Health by
Work to Family Interference**



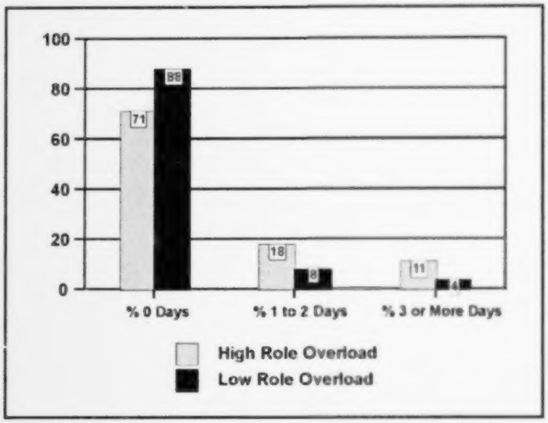
**Absenteeism – Ill Health by
Family to Work Interference**



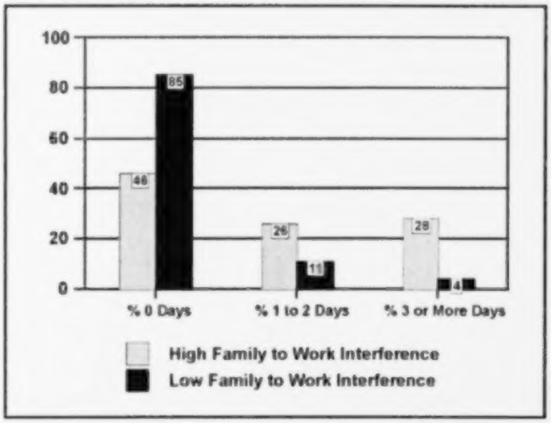
**Absenteeism –
Ill Health by Caregiver Strain**



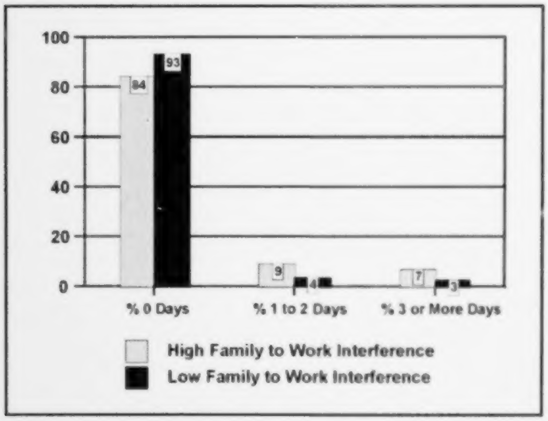
Absenteeism – Child Care Problems by Role Overload



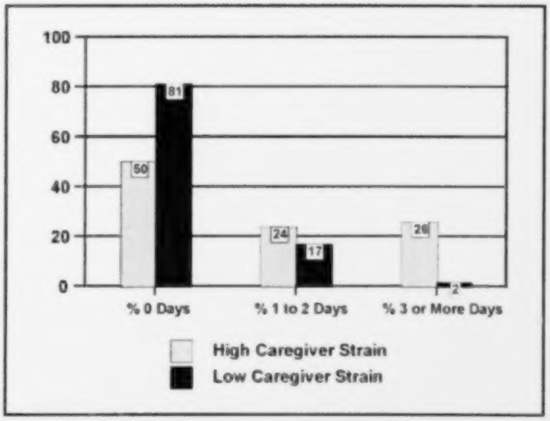
Absenteeism – Child Care Problems by Family to Work Interference



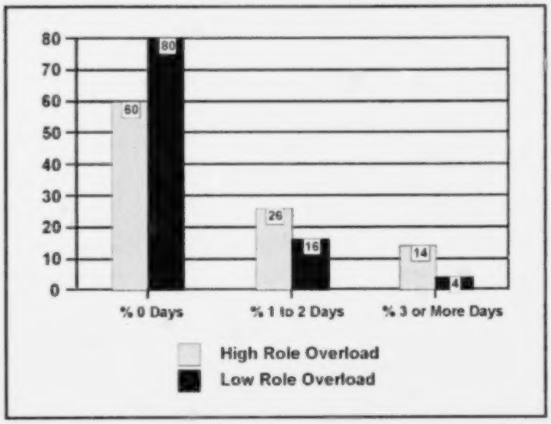
Absenteeism – Elder Care Problems by Family to Work Interference



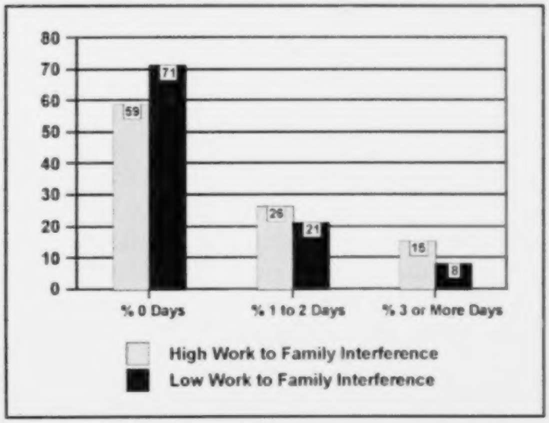
Absenteeism – Elder Care Problems by Caregiver Strain



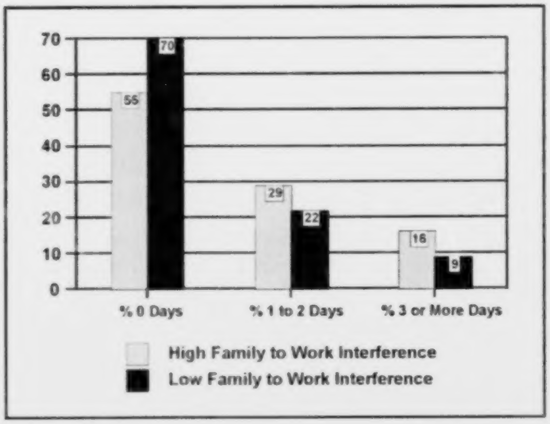
Absenteeism – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue by Role Overload



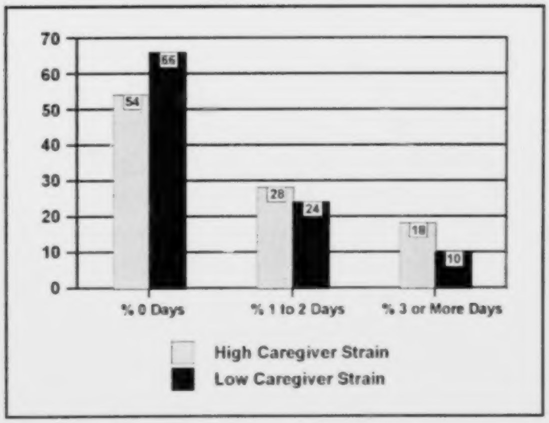
Absenteeism – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue by Work to Family Interference



Absenteeism – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue by Family to Work Interference



Absenteeism – Emotional, Physical or Mental Fatigue by Caregiver Strain



Note: Only those differences that are both significant and substantive are shown in this Appendix.

Appendix F

Calculating the Costs of Absenteeism Due to Work–Life Conflict

The first step in obtaining data for an economic estimate of work–life conflict is to select the stressor and the specific consequences of interest from the wide range of potential consequences that exist. In the case of work–life conflict, we defined the stressor as the perception of role overload, work to family interference, family to work interference and caregiver strain.

This leaves the question of which consequences to explore, given the wide range of outcomes available from this research. This task is made somewhat easier by the requirement that the economic and health cost data be available on a national level from secondary sources. As expressed by Cooper et al. (1996), "The problem is ... not the lack of economic calculation methods, but the lack of factual material on which to base calculations" (p. 78). Given this restriction, *Days absent from work* was selected as a potential cost of work–life conflict to organizations.

The following are the basic components of the socio-economic assessment model (Levi & Lunde-Jensen, 1996), and the Canadian data sources used to meet these needs:

Absence data are needed from which one can calculate the total number of lost workdays, and the frequency of use of the target health services (in our case, physician visits). Data for the number of lost workdays were obtained from Statistics Canada.[31]

Basic economic indicators are needed in order to assign a value to the average output per worker per day. Levi and Lunde-Jensen's approach assumes that the value of work time lost can be measured by the average value of work time in society. The datum selected for this study reflects average earnings of full-time, full-year workers for 1999, the most recent year available (Statistics Canada, 2001).

An estimate of the proportion of absence occurrence related to work–life conflict. The 2001 dataset was used to estimate prevalence, relative risk and the etiologic fraction. The questions to be answered from this dataset are:

(1) What proportion of workers are exposed to the risk factor (in our case, work–life conflict)? This is the *prevalence* question.

(2) What proportion of absence occurrence can be associated with the risk factor? This answers the question of *relative risk*.

(3) With data on both the exposed population and their excess risk, how much of the total absence occurrence would *not* have occurred had the risk factor been absent? This expression is referred to as the *etiologic fraction*.

Tables F1 through F4 provide the data used to answer these questions for work absences.[32] Because gender, dependent care status and job type were all shown to be moderators of work–life conflict (see Chapter Three), these tables also provide separate data for these categories. These analyses are provided in order to identify high-risk groups for work–life conflict and absence and will not be carried into the national-level cost estimates. This level of detail is difficult to obtain from national statistical databases (e.g. daily output calculated on the basis of women's average salary vs. men's, managers vs. those in "other" positions).

Question 1 (prevalence) was answered by calculating the proportion of the sample who reported high work–life conflict (i.e. high role overload, high work to family interference, high family to work interference, high caregiver strain).

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[31] In the year 2000, full-time employees in Canada aged 15 or over lost 79 million workdays due to their own illness or personal/family reasons. Source: Akyeampong, E. (2001). Fact Sheet on Work Absences. *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Winter, 47–50.

[32] These numbers are estimates only and may differ slightly from other numbers reported in the text due to decisions made with respect to the manner in which missing values are handled and rounding decisions.

Question 2 (relative risk - RR) was obtained by calculating the number of days absent for those with high levels of work–life conflict and dividing this number of days by the number of days absent for a control group of individuals with low levels of work–life conflict. Relative risk was then obtained to determine the excess absence associated with the risk factor.

Once the population at risk is quantified, and their excess risk identified, we can calculate how much of the total absence would not have occurred had the risk factor not been present in the population (Question 3: the etiologic fraction). This is calculated from prevalence (P) and relative risk (RR) with the formula:

Etiologic fraction = (RR - 1) * P / ((RR - 1) * P + 1)

So, for example, if 57.2% of the sample report high role overload and 12.3% report low role overload, and employees with high role overload missed 8.8 days of work per year, compared to only 5.7 days per year for those with low role overload, the relative risk ratio would be 1.54 (i.e. absence among workers with high role overload was 1.6 times the level of absence for workers with low role overload).

Continuing the calculations, if the risk of the exposed group is 1.54 times the risk of the control group, and the prevalence is 57.2%, then the formula gives (1.54 - 1) * 0.572 / [(1.54 - 1) * 0.572 + 1] = 23.6%. Excess absence among employees who worked under conditions of high work–life conflict, therefore, has been quantified as 24%. This fraction varies according to differences in prevalence and relative risk between groups as shown in Table F1 below.

To estimate the costs associated with this excess absenteeism, we use the national average annual earnings of full-time, full-year workers. For 1999 (the most recent year available), this worked out to $40,188.[33] Annual earnings are then divided by the estimated number of working days per year (estimated to be 250 by Akyeampong, 2001) to arrive at the loss of $161 per day.

Similar calculations were done to calculate the costs of absenteeism due to work to family interference (Table F2), family to work interference (Table F3) and caregiver strain (Table F4).

Limitations

To our knowledge, these estimates represent the first attempt to assign a dollar value to the costs of work–life conflict at the national level and, as such, are not without their limitations. First, we must again stress that these estimates are minimalistic in that they are based only on the direct value of lost work time (i.e. the earnings of the absent employee). The cost estimates presented in this report do not, therefore, include indirect costs such as replacement of the employee during the absence, "learning curves" during the replacement and reduced productivity. Nor does it cover the cost of employee benefits to help workers cope, such as increased use of employee assistance programs.

Our estimates are also limited by our national-level data sources. The Statistics Canada data include the entire Canadian full-time, full-year workforce—not just employees working for larger (i.e. over 500 employees) firms. In addition, the latest year for which national data were available was 1999. Overall, however, we believe these to be fair estimates, given the data at hand. Should better data become available, the multipliers obtained in this study should allow recalculation with relative ease.

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[33] Source: Statistics Canada. (2001). *Income Trends in Canada 1980–1999*, CD-ROM Catalogue 13F0022XCB.

Table F1: Estimating Prevalence of Role Overload and Relative Risk for Total Work Absence

	Exposed Group: High Role Overload	Control Group: Low Role Overload
Prevalence (P)		
Total	58.0	12.3
Male - Mgr and Prof.	53.8	12.4
Female - Mgr and Prof.	66.6	8.3
Male - Other	45.3	16.8
Female - Other	58.2	13.1
Male - No dependent care	43.2	17.7
Male - Dependent care	55.4	11.7
Female - No dependent care	55.4	14.3
Female - Dependent care	68.5	8.1
Days Absent per Year: Total	8.81	5.68
Relative risk (RR) (ratio of absence high RO group: absence low RO group)		
Total	1.55	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	1.36	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	1.48	
Male - Other	1.59	
Female - Other	1.61	
Male - No dependent care	1.39	
Male - Dependent care	1.47	
Female - No dependent care	1.57	
Female - Dependent care	1.49	
Etiologic fraction (RR-1) * P/((RR-1) * P +1)		
Total	24.2	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	16.2	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	24.1	
Male - Other	21.1	
Female - Other	26.1	
Male - No dependent care	14.5	
Male - Dependent care	20.8	
Female - No dependent care	23.8	
Female - Dependent care	25.2	

Table F2: Estimating Prevalence of Work to Family Interference and Relative Risk for Total Work Absence

	Exposed Group: High Work to Family Interference	Control Group: Low Work to Family Interference
Prevalence (P)		
Total	28.0	35.2
Male - Mgr and Prof.	32.0	29.7
Female - Mgr and Prof.	32.2	28.0
Male - Other	24.0	36.6
Female - Other	25.1	44.0
Male - No dependent care	25.1	37.1
Male - Dependent care	31.9	29.2
Female - No dependent care	22.5	41.8
Female - Dependent care	28.2	32.9
Days Absent per Year: Total	8.76	7.00
Relative risk (RR) (ratio of absence high work to family interference group: absence low work to family interference group)		
Total	1.25	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	1.20	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	1.26	
Male - Other	1.35	
Female - Other	1.37	
Male - No dependent care	1.20	
Male - Dependent care	1.27	
Female - No dependent care	1.32	
Female - Dependent care	1.27	
Etiologic fraction (RR-1) * P/((RR-1) * P +1)		
Total	6.5	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	6.1	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	7.6	
Male - Other	8.0	
Female - Other	7.0	
Male - No dependent care	4.9	
Male - Dependent care	7.9	
Female - No dependent care	6.6	
Female - Dependent care	7.1	

Table F3: Estimating Prevalence of Family to Work Interference and Relative Risk for Total Work Absence

	Exposed Group: High Family to Work Interference	Control Group: Low Family to Work Interference
Prevalence (P)		
Total	9.6	58.8
Male - Mgr and Prof.	8.1	58.4
Female - Mgr and Prof.	11.2	57.4
Male - Other	7.7	58.5
Female - Other	10.2	60.3
Male - No dependent care	5.4	66.1
Male - Dependent care	9.7	53.2
Female - No dependent care	8.3	67.0
Female - Dependent care	12.7	51.9
Days Absent per Year: Total	9.88	7.16
Relative risk (RR) (ratio of absence high FTW group: absence low FTW group)		
Total	1.38	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	1.35	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	1.37	
Male - Other	1.36	
Female - Other	1.40	
Male - No dependent care	1.27	
Male - Dependent care	1.38	
Female - No dependent care	1.44	
Female - Dependent care	1.34	
Etiologic fraction (RR-1) * P/((RR-1) * P +1)		
Total	3.5	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	2.8	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	3.9	
Male - Other	2.7	
Female - Other	3.9	
Male - No dependent care	1.4	
Male - Dependent care	3.5	
Female - No dependent care	3.5	
Female - Dependent care	4.1	

Table F4: Estimating Prevalence of Caregiver Strain (CS) and Relative Risk for Total Work Absence

	Exposed Group: High Caregiver Strain	Control Group: Low Caregiver Strain
Prevalence (P)		
Total	25.9	74.1
Male - Mgr and Prof.	17.3	82.7
Female - Mgr and Prof.	28.8	41.2
Male - Other	21.3	78.8
Female - Other	32.3	67.7
Male - No dependent care	13.8	86.2
Male - Dependent care	20.2	79.8
Female - No dependent care	22.3	77.7
Female - Dependent care	32.9	67.1
Days Absent per Year: Total	10.36	7.6
Relative risk (RR) (ratio of absence high CS group: absence low CS group)		
Total	1.36	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	1.36	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	1.37	
Male - Other	1.43	
Female - Other	1.22	
Male - No dependent care	1.48	
Male - Dependent care	1.38	
Female - No dependent care	1.40	
Female - Dependent care	1.26	
Etiologic fraction (RR-1) * P/((RR-1) * P +1)		
Total	8.6	
Male - Mgr and Prof.	5.8	
Female - Mgr and Prof.	9.7	
Male - Other	8.4	
Female - Other	6.8	
Male - No dependent care	6.2	
Male - Dependent care	7.1	
Female - No dependent care	8.1	
Female - Dependent care	8.0	

Appendix G

Family Outcomes

1. By Gender and Job Type

Family Outcomes by Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Family Adaptation				
Not Satisfied	14.0%	16.5%	15.3%	18.7%
Moderately Satisfied	46.9%	46.3%	43.9%	45.0%
Completely Satisfied	39.1%	37.2%	40.7%	36.3%
Family Life Satisfaction				
Not Satisfied	6.2%	6.9%	6.2%	7.3%
Moderately Satisfied	28.8%	29.4%	28.7%	30.5%
Completely Satisfied	65.0%	63.7%	65.1%	62.2%
Parental Satisfaction				
Not Satisfied	5.6%	6.8%	6.0%	7.9%
Moderately Satisfied	29.7%	32.4%	30.6%	33.1%
Completely Satisfied	64.7%	60.8%	63.4%	59.0%
Positive Parenting				
Monthly or Less	5.7%	4.8%	7.0%	4.9%
Weekly	16.2%	13.5%	16.6%	15.0%
Several Times a Week or Daily	78.1%	81.7%	76.4%	80.1%
Family Integration				
Monthly or Less	28.6%	24.2%	27.5%	27.0%
Weekly	45.8%	48.8%	45.2%	48.3%
Several Times a Week or Daily	25.6%	27.0%	27.2%	24.7%

2. By Gender and Dependent Care Status

Family Outcomes by Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care
Family Adaptation				
Not Satisfied	11.8%	15.8%	14.9%	19.7%
Moderately Satisfied	41.2%	49.1%	41.0%	48.5%
Completely Satisfied	47.0%	35.1%	44.2%	31.9%
Family Life Satisfaction				
Not Satisfied	5.1%	6.7%	6.2%	7.7%
Moderately Satisfied	27.4%	31.5%	26.2%	32.5%
Completely Satisfied	67.5%	61.8%	67.6%	59.7%
Parental Satisfaction				
Not Satisfied	5.0%	6.0%	6.2%	8.0%
Moderately Satisfied	28.1%	30.7%	29.7%	34.2%
Completely Satisfied	66.8%	63.2%	64.1%	57.8%
Positive Parenting				
Monthly or Less	12.5%	3.6%	7.8%	3.3%
Weekly	22.9%	13.7%	29.2%	11.8%
Several Times a Week or Daily	64.6%	82.7%	63.0%	84.8%
Family Integration				
Monthly or Less	31.8%	26.8%	25.0%	26.2%
Weekly	39.6%	48.0%	46.2%	49.7%
Several Times a Week or Daily	28.6%	25.2%	28.8%	24.1%

3. By Gender and Sector of Employment

Family Outcomes by Gender and Sector of Employment

	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Family Adaptation						
Not Satisfied	15.2%	18.1%	14.4%	17.8%	13.3%	17.3%
Moderately Satisfied	45.6%	44.6%	45.4%	45.1%	46.2%	47.4%
Completely Satisfied	39.2%	37.4%	40.2%	37.1%	40.5%	35.3%
Family Life Satisfaction						
Not Satisfied	6.3%	6.6%	6.1%	7.0%	6.0%	8.0%
Moderately Satisfied	30.0%	29.6%	27.9%	30.7%	27.4%	30.4%
Completely Satisfied	63.7%	63.8%	65.9%	62.4%	66.6%	61.6%
Parental Satisfaction						
Not Satisfied	6.1%	7.3%	5.6%	7.5%	5.3%	7.7%
Moderately Satisfied	31.4%	32.5%	28.9%	33.9%	28.4%	32.6%
Completely Satisfied	62.5%	60.2%	65.6%	58.7%	66.4%	59.7%
Positive Parenting						
Monthly or Less	6.3%	5.0%	5.4%	4.4%	6.4%	5.0%
Weekly	16.8%	13.4%	16.0%	14.7%	15.8%	15.8%
Several Times a Week	76.9%	81.6%	78.6%	80.9%	77.8%	79.3%
Family Integration						
Monthly or Less	27.0%	24.5%	31.5%	27.7%	28.6%	26.7%
Weekly	46.0%	48.4%	43.2%	48.2%	46.0%	48.9%
Several Times a Week	27.0%	27.1%	25.3%	24.2%	25.4%	24.4%

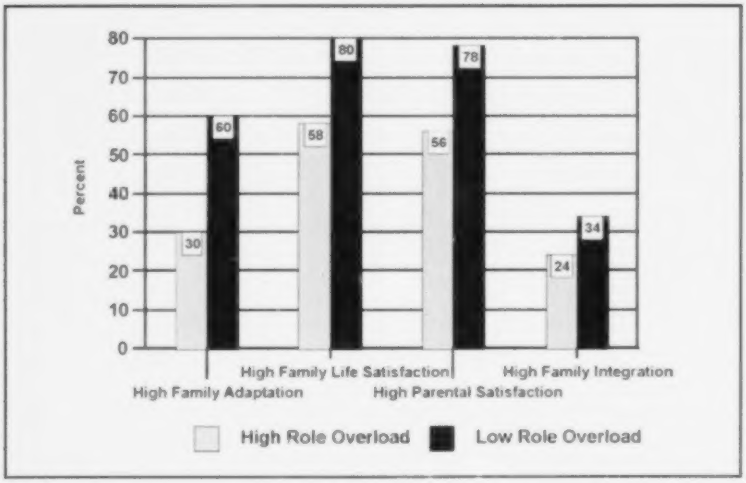
Appendix H

Impact of Work–Life Conflict on Family Outcomes

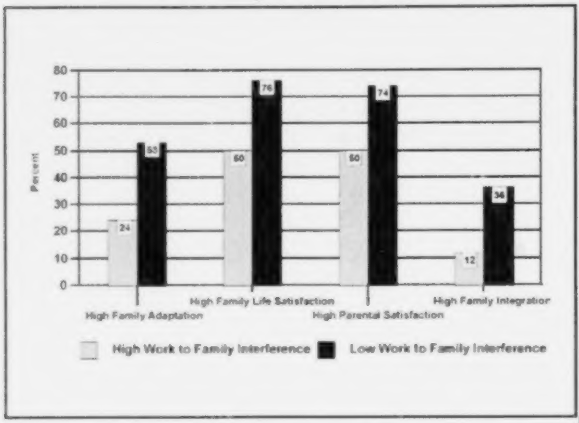
Family Outcomes

Construct	Role Overload		Work to Family Interference		Family to Work Interference		Caregiver Strain	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
% with High Family Adaptation	30	60	24	53	32	45	28	37
% with High Family Life Satisfaction	58	80	50	76	47	70	50	65
% with High Parental Satisfaction	56	78	50	74	48	68	—	—
% with High Family Integration	24	34	12	36	—	—	—	—

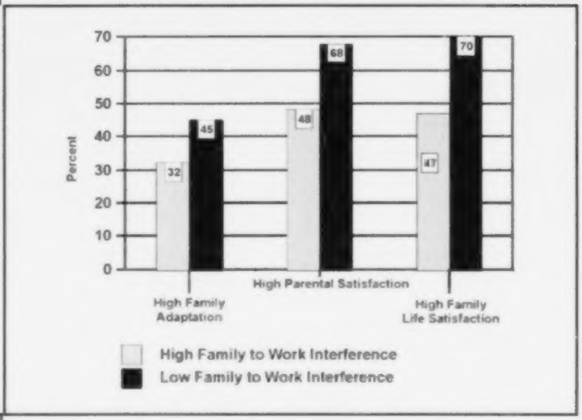
Family Outcomes by Role Overload



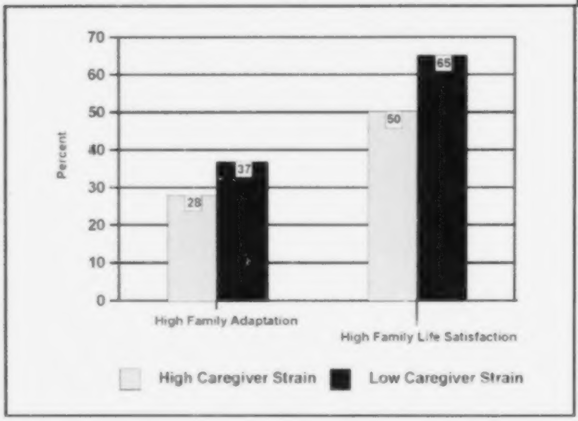
Family Outcomes by Work to Family Interference



Family Outcomes by Family to Work Interference



Family Outcomes by Caregiver Strain



Note: Only those differences that are both significant and substantive are shown in this Appendix.

Appendix I

Employee Outcomes

1. By Gender and Job Type

Employee Outcomes by Gender and Job Type

	Manager/Professional		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Perceived Stress				
Low	4.5%	2.4%	4.7%	2.5%
Medium	48.5%	38.5%	46.0%	36.5%
High	47.0%	59.0%	49.4%	61.1%
Depressed Mood				
Low	28.7%	19.2%	25.6%	15.8%
Medium	43.9%	44.1%	43.0%	39.5%
High	27.4%	36.7%	31.5%	44.7%
Burnout				
Low	31.3%	24.5%	33.8%	28.4%
Medium	39.4%	38.9%	38.8%	38.4%
High	29.3%	36.6%	27.5%	33.2%
Life Satisfaction				
Low	18.5%	18.8%	24.0%	23.6%
Medium	36.9%	36.8%	39.1%	38.7%
High	44.6%	44.3%	36.9%	37.7%
Perceived Physical Health				
Poor	2.1%	2.3%	2.6%	3.4%
Fair	13.1%	12.4%	15.5%	15.2%
Good	34.9%	33.4%	36.6%	35.5%
Very Good	34.5%	35.5%	32.9%	32.8%
Excellent	15.3%	16.4%	12.5%	13.1%

2. By Gender and Dependent Care Status

Employee Outcomes by Gender and Dependent Care Status

	Male		Female	
	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care	No Dependent Care	Dependent Care
Perceived Stress				
Low	6.2%	3.5%	3.0%	2.0%
Medium	50.0%	45.8%	40.9%	34.9%
High	43.8%	50.7%	56.1%	63.1%
Depressed Mood				
Low	29.7%	26.0%	18.9%	15.7%
Medium	42.5%	44.3%	42.6%	40.5%
High	27.8%	29.7%	38.5%	43.8%
Burnout				
Low	36.7%	29.9%	29.8%	24.9%
Medium	37.2%	40.4%	37.9%	39.2%
High	26.1%	29.7%	32.2%	35.9%
Life Satisfaction				
Low	20.6%	20.6%	20.4%	23.6%
Medium	36.7%	38.5%	37.0%	38.7%
High	42.7%	41.0%	42.5%	37.7%
Perceived Physical Health				
Poor	2.2%	2.3%	3.0%	2.8%
Fair	12.9%	14.8%	11.8%	15.1%
Good	33.3%	37.1%	34.0%	35.2%
Very Good	35.9%	32.5%	35.4%	33.5%
Excellent	15.9%	13.3%	15.8%	13.4%

3. By Gender and Sector of Employment

Employee Outcomes by Gender and Sector of Employment

	Public Sector		Private Sector		Not-for-Profit Sector	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Perceived Stress						
Low	4.2%	2.4%	5.2%	2.9%	4.8%	2.3%
Medium	44.5%	37.1%	49.0%	36.2%	50.9%	39.9%
High	51.3%	60.6%	45.8%	60.9%	44.3%	57.7%
Depressed Mood						
Low	25.2%	16.0%	27.9%	17.2%	31.3%	19.2%
Medium	43.3%	40.9%	46.5%	40.7%	42.3%	40.9%
High	31.4%	43.2%	25.6%	42.0%	26.3%	40.0%
Burnout						
Low	32.3%	27.7%	33.1%	28.3%	31.6%	24.1%
Medium	39.0%	38.4%	39.4%	37.2%	39.3%	40.0%
High	28.7%	33.9%	27.5%	34.5%	29.1%	35.9%
Life Satisfaction						
Low	22.7%	21.3%	19.6%	22.1%	17.3%	21.6%
Medium	38.5%	38.2%	36.5%	38.3%	36.6%	37.2%
High	38.8%	40.5%	44.0%	39.6%	46.1%	41.2%
Perceived Physical Health						
Poor	2.6%	3.5%	2.1%	2.8%	1.9%	2.2%
Fair	15.2%	15.4%	13.2%	14.7%	12.4%	11.4%
Good	36.4%	35.5%	36.0%	34.3%	33.9%	33.4%
Very Good	32.3%	32.0%	34.2%	34.4%	36.6%	36.5%
Excellent	13.6%	13.6%	14.5%	13.8%	15.2%	16.4%

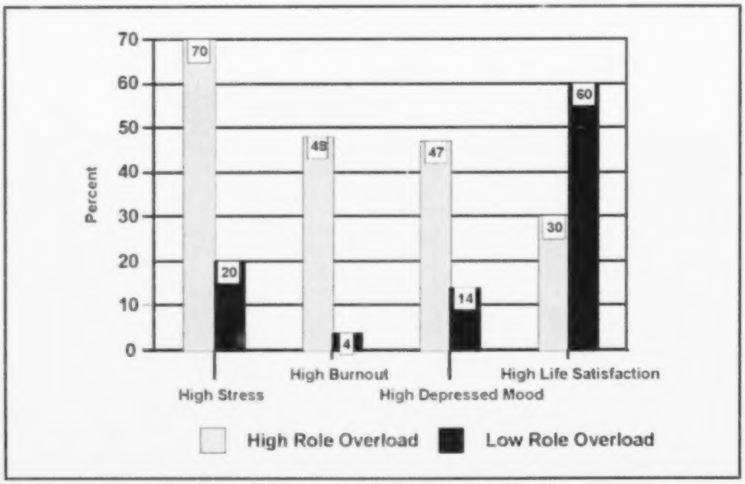
Appendix J

Impact of Work-Life Conflict on Employee Outcomes

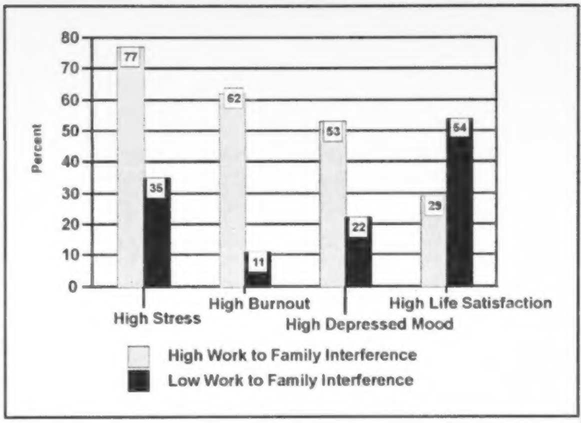
Employee Outcomes

Construct	Role Overload		Work to Family Interference		Family to Work Interference		Caregiver Strain	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
% with High Perceived Stress	70	20	77	35	74	47	80	54
% with High Burnout	48	4	62	11	44	28	50	32
% with High Depressed Mood	47	14	53	22	52	30	60	34
% with High Life Satisfaction	30	60	29	54	29	47	24	42
Perceived Physical Health:								
• Fair/Poor	22	37	41	7	25	68	25	37
• Good	38	11	31	59	27	36	37	14
• Very good/Excellent	33	53	28	37	35	17	36	47

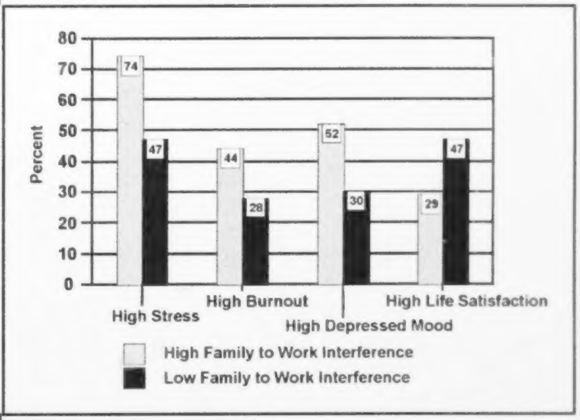
Employee Outcomes by Role Overload



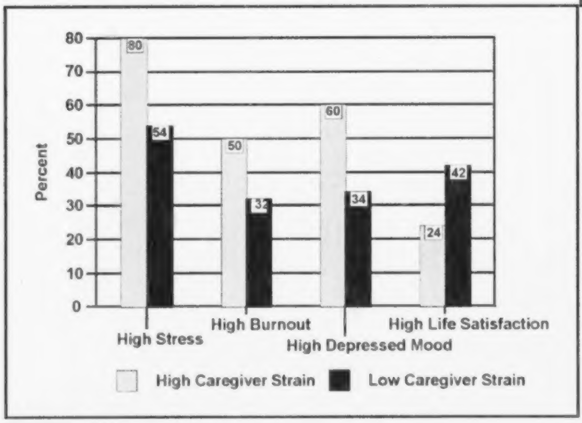
Employee Outcomes by Work to Family Interference



Employee Outcomes by Family to Work Interference



Employee Outcomes by Caregiver Strain



Note: Only those differences that are both significant and substantive are shown in this Appendix.

Appendix K

Relative Risk Associated with Different Forms of Work–Life Conflict

Construct	Relative Risk Associated with			
	Role Overload	Work to Family Interference	Family to Work Interference	Caregiver Strain
Organizational Outcomes				
% High Organizational Commitment *	1.3	1.4	—	—
% High Job Satisfaction *	2.0	2.8	1.4	1.3
% High Satisfaction with: *				
• Number of hours	1.8	2.7	—	—
• Schedule of hours	1.4	1.9	—	—
• Workload	2.4	3.0	1.3	—
• Career development	1.5	1.7	—	—
• Ability to meet career goals	1.6	1.6	1.3	—
% High Job Stress	5.6	6.0	1.4	1.3
% Think of Leaving Weekly or More	2.3	2.8	1.3	1.3
% Saying They Would Leave for:				
• Lack of recognition	2.6	2.6	1.4	1.3
• Non-supportive work env.	3.6	4.1	1.5	1.4
• Frustrating work env.	3.5	2.8	1.3	—
• Unrealistic work	12.5	6.6	—	—
• More time personal/family	4.7	6.7	1.6	—
• Personality conflicts	3.0	2.4	—	—
• Values different	3.0	3.3	—	—
• Move closer to family	—	3.0	—	—
% High Rating of Organization *	1.7	1.9	—	1.3
% with High Absenteeism Due to:				
• All causes	1.6	1.3	3.0	1.4
• Ill health	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.4
• Child Care	2.8	—	7.0	—
• Elder Eare	—	—	—	13.0
• Emotional, physical or mental fatigue	3.5	1.9	1.8	1.8

Construct	Relative Risk Associated with			
	Role Overload	Work to Family Interference	Family to Work Interference	Caregiver Strain
Family Outcomes				
% with High Family Life Satisfaction *	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.3
% with High Parental Satisfaction *	1.4	1.5	1.4	—
% with High Family Adaptation *	2.0	2.2	1.4	1.3
% with High Family Integration *	1.4	3.0	—	—
% with High Positive Parenting *	—	—	—	—
Employee Outcomes				
% with High Perceived Stress	3.5	2.2	1.6	1.5
% with High Burnout	12.0	5.6	1.6	1.6
% with High Depressed Mood	3.4	2.4	1.7	1.8
% with High Life Satisfaction *	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.8
% with Fair or Poor Perceived Physical Health	3.1	2.3	1.9	1.6

Relative risk was calculated in two ways:

- For those constructs marked with a *, risk was calculated by dividing the mean score achieved by employees with low work–life conflict by the mean scores achieved by those with high work–life conflict.
- For all other constructs, risk was calculated by dividing the mean score achieved by employees with high work–life conflict by the mean scores achieved by those with low work–life conflict.

Note: Only relative risks of 1.3 or greater are shown.